

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

Strong Press, Strong Democracy

Breathing Room

Toward a new Arab media

LAWRENCE PINTAK

THE NOT-SO-GREAT MIGRATION

PAMELA NEWKIRK

OBAMA'S INVISIBLE WAR

TARA MCKELVEY

ANYBODY THERE?

FLEET STREET'S PHONE SCANDAL

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Announces the Winner of the 2011 GOLDSMITH PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Marshall Allen and Alex Richards

Las Vegas Sun

"Do No Harm: Hospital Care in Las Vegas"

After a two-year investigation, including the review of 2.9 million records, the *Sun's* five-part multi-platform series identifies the preventable infections and injuries taking place in Las Vegas hospitals. Allen and Richards set out to impose transparency on Las Vegas hospitals so they will be held accountable. The multi-media presentation of their findings resulted in consumers having access to quality-of-care data that will help them make smart decisions.

FINALISTS

Jeff Gottlieb, Ruben Vives and The Los Angeles Times Staff
The Los Angeles Times
"Breach of Faith"

An investigation by *The Los Angeles Times* exposed widespread corruption in the tiny city of Bell, leading to multiple investigations, eight arrests, multimillion-dollar refunds for taxpayers and greater transparency about government salaries across California.

Laura Sullivan and Steven Drummond
National Public Radio
"Behind the Bail Bond System"

In a three-part series examining bail in the United States, National Public Radio's Laura Sullivan illuminated the powerful bail industry and found that it hurts defendants, their victims and taxpayers. NPR's reporting has been cited in county commission meetings in Florida and in the Statehouses in Virginia, Florida and North Carolina.

Jesse Eisinger, Jake Bernstein, ProPublica;
Adam Davidson, Planet Money, National Public Radio;
Ira Glass, Alex Blumberg, This American Life, Chicago
Public Radio
"Betting Against the American Dream - The Wall Street Money Machine"

ProPublica, in collaboration with NPR's *Planet Money* and Chicago Public Radio's *This American Life*, revealed how the recession of 2008 was significantly deepened by the machinations of Merrill Lynch, Citibank and Magnetar, a little-known hedge fund. As a result, the SEC is investigating deals referenced in the series, and new rules are being implemented from the financial reform bill.

Karen de Sá

San Jose Mercury News

"Sponsored Bills in Sacramento: How Our Laws Are Really Made"

Karen de Sá's series provides the first comprehensive examination of the influences of outside interests in California lawmaking. As a result of her investigation, legislative leaders are proposing rule changes, and outside groups are pushing for mandatory disclosure of all meetings between lawmakers and lobbyists and greater disclosure of campaign contributions from sponsors. There is also a ballot measure to repeal the term limit law.

Dana Priest and William Arkin
The Washington Post
"Top Secret America"

"Top Secret America" describes a massive expansion of government created in response to 9/11 that has become so large, unwieldy and secretive that no one knows how much money it costs, how many people it employs or how many programs exist within it. The two-year-long project resulted in congressional investigations, a review of all intelligence programs requested by the Defense Secretary, and the CIA's reduction of contract workforce.

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COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

May/June 2011

"To assess the performance of journalism... to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession, and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent."

—from the founding editorial, 1961



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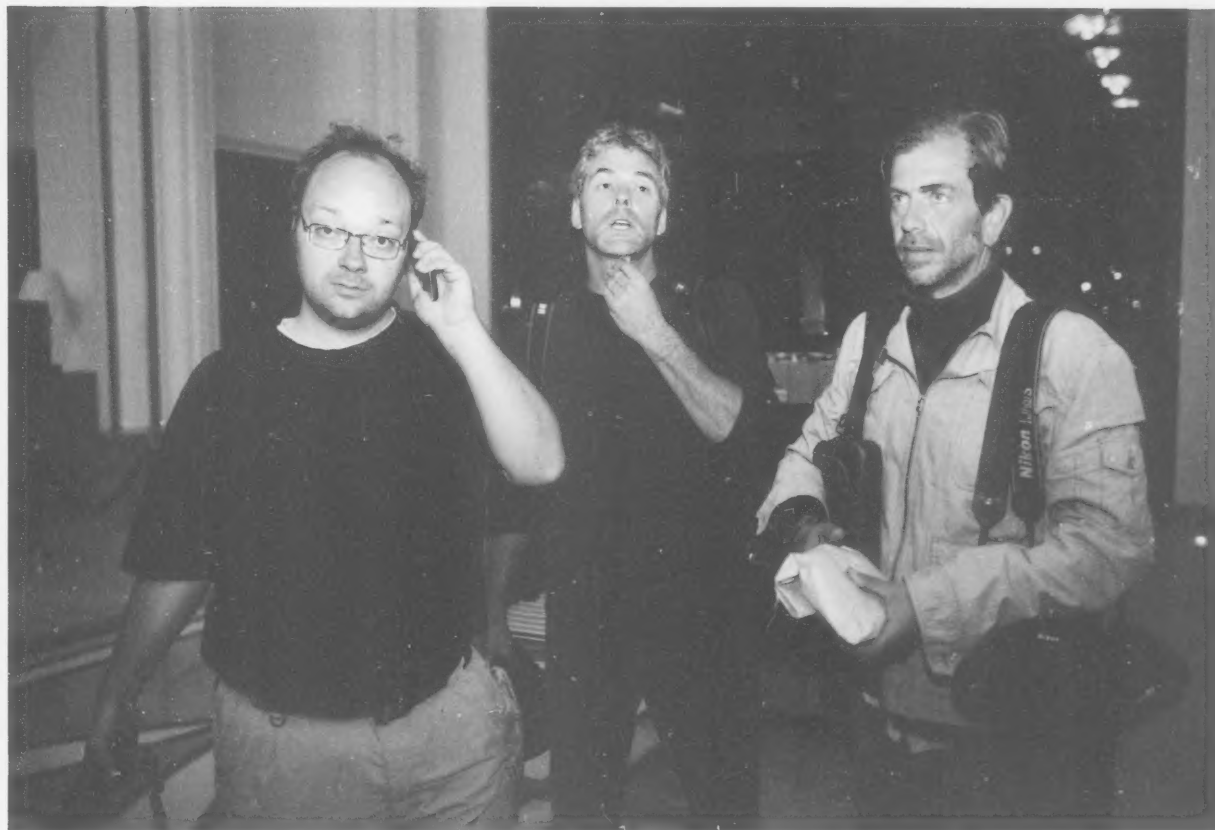
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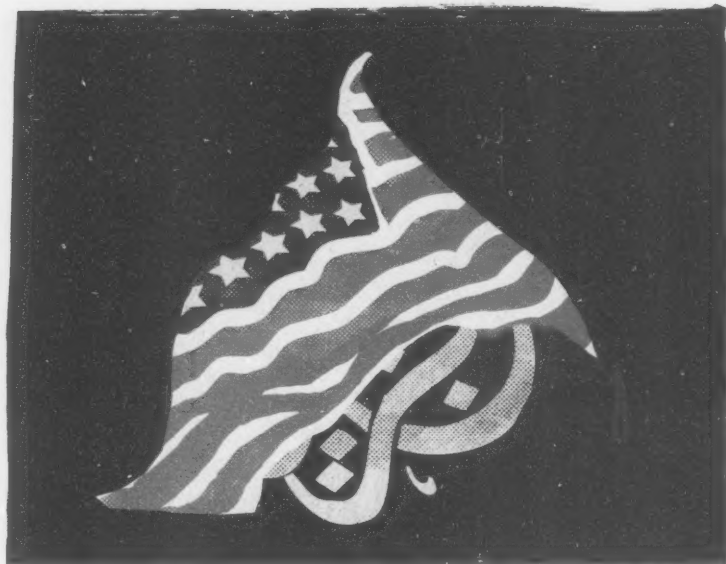
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Opening Shot



Is journalism worth dying for? Murdered journalist Anna Politkovskaya's editor used those words as the title of a posthumously published collection of Politkovskaya's articles. The question was meant to refer to the danger faced by reporters in repressive regimes like Russia. But it has taken on new relevance for journalists covering the series of revolutions in Arab countries. Reporters are operating in spontaneously erupting, unofficial war zones where they aren't necessarily recognized as noncombatant observers. Their press passes do not protect them from being branded as enemies, subject to capture, detention, beatings, and threats of death. The Committee to Protect Journalists has documented about five hundred attacks across the Arab world since unrest began in December. At least four journalists have been killed in Libya alone and others have died in custody elsewhere. At least one Western correspondent has been raped. Several more have gone missing, including freelancers Clare Morgana Gillis and James Foley, who, along with photographers Manu Brabo and Anton Hammerl, were captured on April 5 and who do not have the influence of a global media powerhouse that employs them to use as leverage for their release. War reporters have traditionally charged into conflict, knowing that, unlike the combatants, they can get out. But what if they can't? Are we adequately prepared to answer that question? **CJR**

Freedom Agence-France Presse reporter Dave Clark (left), photographer Roberto Schmidt (right), and Getty Images photographer Joe Raedle were released from Libyan custody on March 23 after four days during which they were kept in a steel prison cell, deprived of food, and beaten.



Lift the Shroud

Why we need Al Jazeera English

For most of the last decade, when Americans heard mention of Al Jazeera, the Arabic language Qatar-based satellite news channel, they didn't hear anything good. The station was saddled with prejudices based on that prefix; in 2004, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made the insinuation explicit, tagging the network as "a mouthpiece of al Qaeda." The station was considered so toxic that at that year's Democratic convention,

when John Kerry worked to assure voters of his anti-terrorist mettle, Al Jazeera was forbidden to hang its banner.

So when, under Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, Al Jazeera announced plans to start an independently managed English-language service—and to establish a broadcast center in Washington, DC—the move was "greeted in the United States with something approaching horror," wrote Spencer Ackerman in a *New Republic* piece. Cable providers did not take it; to this day, if you don't live in Washington DC, northern Ohio, or Burlington, Vermont, your system doesn't carry Al Jazeera English.

Burlington's city-owned cable network made it available shortly after its 2006 launch. "We were certainly squeamish about it at first, given its reputation in the United States," Tim Nulty, then the director of Burlington Telecom, told *The Associated Press*. "But if you look at it, it looks like BBC. I think it's more mainstream and more objective than CNN."

Not everyone agreed with Nulty, and the station was dropped in 2008. After protests in favor and opposition, it was restored. Even then, in the famously progressive college town, there was brief talk of a ballot measure to banish it again.

David Marash is a former *Nightline* reporter who, as *AJE*'s biggest American hire, was once something of a US spokesperson for the channel. He quit after being eased out of the anchor chair in 2008, telling *CJR* that while he thought their coverage of the southern hemisphere was peerless, he had grown disappointed over decreasing editorial independence and sometimes "execrable" coverage of America. But now, three years later, Marash told Lawrence Pintak, author of this issue's cover story (page 22), that the network is "the model of television news coverage." Pintak, a former CBS Middle East correspondent who taught journalism in Cairo, reports that in hundreds of interactions with the channel's 550-plus journalists, he's never heard a complaint about skewed coverage.

Of course, private cable systems are under no obligation to carry any particular channel, and your mileage as it comes to *AJE* may vary. But to the staffers at the network, the reason for their American blackout is plain—the channel has never been able to overcome a base hostility, an unease about its Arab sister network's journalism. The cable conglomerates blocking the door insist the issue is limited space and funds. We suspect the real reason is fear of protests, based on tenuous guilt by association, from those motivated by racism and Islamophobia.

No matter its explanation, there's something self-defeating about this state of affairs; we are a country that badly needs more information and perspective on the rest of the globe. As a wave of popular unrest and reform sweeps across the Arab world, the network has proven its mettle, and its contribution would be all the more valuable as fragile gains solidify or evaporate.

And people are hungry for it: as crowds filled Cairo's Tahrir Square, some 1.6 million US viewers streamed *AJE* online. That so many so easily bypassed the cable distributors suggests these gatekeepers' coming obsolescence, and along with it, their ability to so dramatically shape America's television diet. But that day, if it comes, is some way off. The complications of the world mean we really shouldn't wait any longer to make this vital channel available on our television sets. It's time to lift the shroud, and time to see another angle on the world beyond our shores. **CJR**

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Grading Teachers

LynNell Hancock's article, "Tested: Covering schools in the age of micro-measurement" (CJR, March/April), gives a thoughtful and thorough overview of the current climate in education policy and in education journalism.

But I would have appreciated a more complete exploration of the ethics and efficacy of the *Los Angeles Times*'s project, in which the paper developed "its own job performance system" for teachers. Is it ethical to not just publish the previously unreleased value-added stats, as the *Times* did, but show each teacher's rating in a graphic format on a continuum from "most effective" to "least effective"? With the value-added project, the *Los Angeles Times* went beyond being the messenger to being the judge and jury.

Caroline Grannan
San Francisco, CA

In late September 2010, Rigoberto Ruelas Jr., a thirty-nine-year-old Hispanic teacher from the eastern part of Los Angeles, committed suicide. Rigoberto was deeply depressed—not because he had been laid off or terminated as so many teachers have been in California and elsewhere because of our "under-performing" economy. He was depressed because his name had been listed in a controversial database created and published by the *Los Angeles Times* and based on the value-added method that Hancock writes about. The *Times* identified him as slightly "less effective" than other LA teachers.

Despite repeated warnings by experts in education testing and statistics that the *Times* database of teacher ratings were unreliable and misleading, the paper published its grades for about six thousand third- through fifth-grade teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Education Secretary Duncan cheered and urged newspapers across the country to follow the *Times*'s example.



He 'dropped out' of the teaching profession he loved, away from the children for whom he lived.

According to school-district officials, Rigoberto Ruelas was incredibly dedicated, with an almost perfect work attendance during his fourteen-year teaching career. According to parents whose children he taught, Rigoberto would work late into the evening to boost his students' aspirations and academic performance through after-school tutoring and homework assistance. Most important, many of the students he taught report that Rigoberto challenged and inspired them to stay in school, away from gangs, and to graduate from college—even many years after they left his fifth-grade classroom.

Ruelas family members and teacher colleagues at Miramonte, say Rigoberto was depressed at being rated "average" in his ability to raise students' English scores and "less effective" in his ability to raise math scores and slightly "less effective" than his peers. He became so de-

spondent with his "failure" that he took his own life. And so a teacher who could have helped thousands of poor, immigrant, and Latino students climb the educational ladder "failed" to measure up to a misleading performance standard, and in despair, "dropped out" of the teaching profession he loved, away from the children for whom he lived.

James J. Lyons

Arlington, VA

A version of this letter appeared in *Hispanic Link News Service*.

A Life's Work

We at *The Florida Times-Union* and Jacksonville.com particularly appreciated CJR's March/April piece, "The Cancer Report" by Joel Meares, because of our own Jessie-Lynne Kerr, who has been a reporter here since 1964. Two years ago, Jessie-Lynne was diagnosed with small-cell lung cancer, which is especially virulent and which since has spread. For more than two years, she has fought off the cancers with waves of chemotherapy as well as her stainless-steel will. Ultimately, the cancer will prevail. But Jessie-Lynne still comes to work every day she can, even after hours of chemo.

Jessie-Lynne has covered her cancer as thoroughly, as creatively, and as honestly as she's covered every other story over her career. The Global Lung Cancer Coalition flew in to present her with its New Media Award for her personal blog. Recently, 225 community leaders and others surprised her with a celebration of her life. She admonished them: "This does not excuse you from the funeral."

The city renamed a section of Riverside Avenue in front of our offices for her. And her colleagues put up a plaque at the door aimed at younger reporters when they come to work: "Always ask the tough questions. Don't accept BS for an answer. Jessie-Lynne Kerr did that as a T-U reporter for nearly five de-

cares. She's watching to see that you do the same."

Frank M. Denton

Editor, The Florida Times-Union/Jacksonville.com

Jacksonville, FL

Shhhh!

Re: Sanford J. Ungar's article "Unnecessary Secrets: Opening government, from Ellsberg to Manning" (CJR, March/April). At the risk of sounding like an intelligence-community apologist, it strikes me that discussions of the FOIA and WikiLeaks tend to miss elements that would provide a better picture of what's in play. It's probably a safe bet to assume that, more often than not, the reason government documents are routinely classified is not because of the documents' factual content, but because revealing such information would provide insight into how the information was gathered, and the capabilities of those who gather it. A difference between process and product. The fact, for example, that Qaddafi prefers blond nurses doesn't really matter; how that becomes known does.

A separate issue is that if the govern-

ment's allegations are true, Julian Assange and Bradley Manning have done the metaphorical equivalent of walking up and kicking a sleeping bear. What seems curious is the current widespread surprise and outrage because the bear woke up, and reacted by doing what bears do. It also makes you wonder: if the bear doesn't react, what does it say about the bear?

Perry Gaskill

San Francisco, CA

A Rare Man of Courage

As Percy Crosby's daughter, court-appointed administrator of his estate, and president of Skippy, Inc., I found David Hajdu's article interesting ("Not for Laughs: A pathbreaking look at the dark comic genius behind Skippy," CJR, March/April). However, I question his reliance on Jerry Robinson's 1978 biography (*Skippy and Percy Crosby*), whose license I granted and rescinded for legal reasons, and on Robinson's professed expertise on my father's life and career. Why Robinson refused to recognize my role in seeking redress against Skippy infringers who wanted my father silenced is known only to him. Robinson's allega-

tions that Percy Crosby was "mentally ill" and that "he proceeded to undo everything he had accomplished" (in the 1930s) is a malicious rumor that benefits those who conspired to steal Percy Crosby's Skippy business and destroy his career. What is unknown is my father's courageous crusade against the behemoth of organized crime during the Great Depression and Prohibition—he used his Skippy comic strip to satirize Al Capone's rackets and ties to Wall Street and paid a high price for the cruel vendetta that ensued.

In the recently published book I wrote, *Skippy vs. The Mob*, I used many examples of Crosby art that should dispel the false portrayal of my father as "mentally ill" and other denigrating comments about his failed career. The truth is my father was a maverick and a rare man of courage during the dark history of the Capone era.

Joan Crosby Tibbetts

President, Skippy, Inc.

Altamonte Springs, FL

David Hajdu responds: I share Joan Crosby Tibbetts's admiration for Percy Crosby as a maverick and a man of rare

NOTES FROM OUR ONLINE READERS

WITH THE RECENT DEPARTURES OF FRANK RICH AND BOB Herbert from the *New York Times's* opinion pages, and a new section (Week in Review) to fill with thoughts and views, editorial-page editor Andrew Rosenthal will surely be looking for new hires. In our March 29 News Meeting, we asked our readers, Whom should he call?

If they're looking to replace Herbert as something of an in-house conscience, my vote goes to John B. Judis. He's been writing brilliantly about policy and politics for a few decades, and never fails to make illuminate any topic he tackles. His smartly progressive/center-left orientation is in the best tradition of *The New Republic*, his current journalistic home, and perfect for the current *Times* op-ed page. —John Ettorre

Here's a novel idea, how about someone who didn't work for *Ramparts* or the *Daily Worker/People's World*. —Mike H

If they can inhale all those blogging guys (whom they profiled in a boys-only bloggers profile), they certainly can choose among the crew of gifted women blogging on issues of all kinds. PunditMom for one. Go read her Politics Daily columns—or Jill Miller Zimon—and Kelly Wickham whose moving posts on education, race, and family would stand up against anything there at present. Or Robin Martyr or

Jessica Mason Pieklo, both of whom I work with at Care2. My Twitter feed is full of gifted women watching the world. They aren't that hard to find. —Cynthia Samuels

WHEN THE WASHINGTON POST UNVEILED ON ITS WEBSITE the option of clicking on "left-leaning" or "right-leaning" columnists, Ben Adler, in his March 17 CJR piece, "*WaPo's New Opinion Tabs Miss the Mark*," took aim at the *Post's* simplistic dichotomy. One reader responded this way:

The *Post's* new tabs are particularly baffling to a foreigner, because the split is based on the American definition of left and right, which means the center is somewhere to the right of Attila the Hun. Writers like Richard Cohen and David Ignatius are mere echo boards for the ubiquitous message of the Washington establishment. Their purpose is to say "I'm a liberal but..." (Cohen) or "I'm an independent but..." (Ignatius) before repeating the conventional Beltway wisdom.

A far better way to split the columnists would be to put all those who supported the Iraq war on one side, and all those who opposed it on the other. Then readers looking for a track record of being right could ignore the former category. Unfortunately, that would include over 90 percent of the *Post's* opinion writers. —Kevin Robb

Call for Entries

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courage. I referred in my piece to Crosby having been "plagued by mental illness" (my actual phrase), and the record of facts that led to his prolonged hospitalization for psychiatric treatment make that clear. To acknowledge mental illness is not an act of malice, nor is it a form of denigration.

Mr. Inside

In your March/April editorial ("Members Only: Two cheers for high-cost subscription journalism"), you make the mistaken, idealistic, and naive assumption that these news organizations are, or want to be, reporting "in the public interest." I'm far more pessimistic, and history shows I'll probably be proved right. Beltway reporters from *Politico* and *National Journal* are already bed partners of the political power brokers of Washington, and working yet more closely with lobbyists, politicians, and social-network mavens, without any competition from outsiders, can only ensure further corruption. I imagine they'll more resemble Wall Street and business journalists—captured by their sources and enthralled by the money and power and the thrill of being "inside the loop." There is no way that an independent journalist can escape that corruption.

James

Comment posted on C.J.R.org

Mind Your NGOs

Karen Rothmyer's article, "Hiding the Real Africa: Why NGOs prefer bad news" (CJR, March/April), says many things right and long overdue. People who have lived in Africa for many years and have experience with NGOs tend to agree with Rothmyer's views. Many thanks to Rothmyer and CJR for helping to broaden the dialogue.

Victor de la Torre Sans

Advocacy and Projects' Director

Africa Siglo 21

Nairobi, Kenya

Sincere thanks to Karen Rothmyer for her piece, "Hiding the Real Africa." As a veteran communicator for a large NGO, I agree that NGOs feed that "media beast" when they respond to large disasters and other sources of bad news. I'm circulating the piece amongst the growing

number of concerned insiders in our organization, which, hopefully, will lead to some change.

Anonymous

Ontario, Canada

Yes, the US media insufficiently covers good news about development in Africa, but the positive regional numbers on poverty, health, and economic growth cited by Rothmyer conceal terrible inequities. In too many African countries, statistics on health outcomes, if they are reported, can still shock the conscience. *Time's* June 2010 photo story on maternal death in Sierra Leone sheds some light on a rarely reported truth: a pregnant reader in the US is forty times more likely to survive pregnancy than her counterpart in Sierra Leone, where one woman in twenty-one will lose her life to complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

Health advocates try to raise attention to these issues, and struggle to present a balanced picture. The most recent report from Countdown to 2015—a global effort to track progress in reducing maternal and child deaths, whose participants prominently include NGOs and UN agencies—began like this: "The Countdown report for 2010 contains good news—many countries are making progress, reducing mortality and increasing coverage of effective health interventions at an accelerating pace. But the news is not all good." This is hardly "poverty porn."

Africa is anything but "a continent of unending horrors," and NGOs and aid groups are eager to provide reporters with stories of empowerment and progress. But an African woman dies every two minutes from pregnancy-related causes, and nearly every one of these deaths is preventable. This is no stereotype; it is a simple, tragic, and infuriating fact.

Adam Deixel

Communications director, Family Care International
New York, NY

Required Reading

Laurel to CJR for stunning coverage by Abigail Deutsch of the reissue of Jessica Mitford's *Poison Penmanship: The Gentle Art of Muckraking*. Mitford has too often been underestimated by the

journalism establishment as one of our most effective muckrakers. Ethics may not have been one of her strong points, but results surely were. I used her *Poison Penmanship* as a required text in my journalism classes at Sonoma State University in California and my students appreciated her tips for investigative journalism.

Carl Jensen
Cotati, CA

Correction

The March/April issue's Darts and Laurels column stated that Randy Billings of *The Forecaster* broke the story about the *Portland Press Herald's* donation of ad space during a political campaign. In fact, Al Diamon of *DownEast.com* and Jeff Inglis of *The Portland Phoenix* had both written about it several days earlier on their respective blogs. We regret the error. **CJR**

EDITOR'S NOTE

THIS IS A FULL ISSUE AND, WE HOPE YOU AGREE, A GOOD ONE. WE INVITE YOU to read every word, especially the cover story and especially, well, everything. You may notice, for example, an emerging sensibility in the Ideas + Reviews section in the back of the book. That's because Justin Peters, our stellar Managing Editor/Web, has added it to his portfolio. It was Justin who asked Ted Rall to review Brooke Gladstone's new graphic-novel-format manifesto on the media—in graphic-novel format. As Rall says, via a panel in his review on page 56, "Meta cool!" Also cool: Justin, Craig Silverman, and Joel Meares (twice!) are all finalists in this year's Mirror Awards, to be given out by Syracuse University in June for the best media reporting.

Meanwhile, please watch for a major event on our website, CJR.org. On May 10, we'll publish a ten-chapter report that addresses this key question: Can the commercial market support digitally based journalism in the US? Back in November, we published "The Reconstruction of American Journalism," a report by Leonard Downie Jr. and Michael Schudson. That was a sweeping assessment of the direction of the news business in the face of economic and technical upheaval, with several public-policy recommendations.

This report, "The Story So Far: What we know about the business of digital journalism," takes a different tack, focusing on the economic issues that for-profit news organizations—large and small, old and new—face with their digital ventures. It works through the ways that the great digital transformation has been disruptive to the business models of news media. It points out that the negative effects have been nearly immediate, while most of the positive ones—and there are some—usually take longer to develop.

"The Story So Far" was written by Bill Grueskin, the dean of academic affairs here at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, and the former deputy managing editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, where he also ran the paper's online operation for six years; Ava Seave, a principal of Quantum Media, a consulting firm focused on marketing and strategic planning for media, information, and entertainment companies; and Lucas Graves, a Ph.D. candidate at the J-school.

The report is a project of the school's new Tow Center for Digital Journalism. We believe it will advance the conversation about the future of news. You can read it at www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/the_story_so_far.php.

Speaking of digital: CJR is now available on Kindle, in Kindle's clean and lovely format, at cjr.org/kindle. You can buy the current issue there for \$3.99 or subscribe for 99 cents per month. And—drum roll, please—a full digital edition (including the art, photos, and all the trimmings) of the magazine you hold in your hands is now available via Zinio, at cjr.org/zinio. You can read it on your Mac or PC or iPad. It's searchable, and you can highlight, bookmark, or save pages and articles, as well as share them with colleagues and friends.

By the way, with the approach of CJR's fiftieth birthday, this is a great time to renew your subscription and to think about gift subscriptions for people who care about the future of the news. Some good things are coming; we'll keep you posted.

—Mike Hoyt

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—Jill Riepenhoff, The Columbus Dispatch



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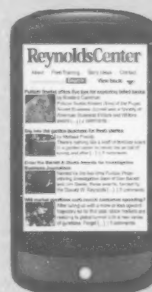
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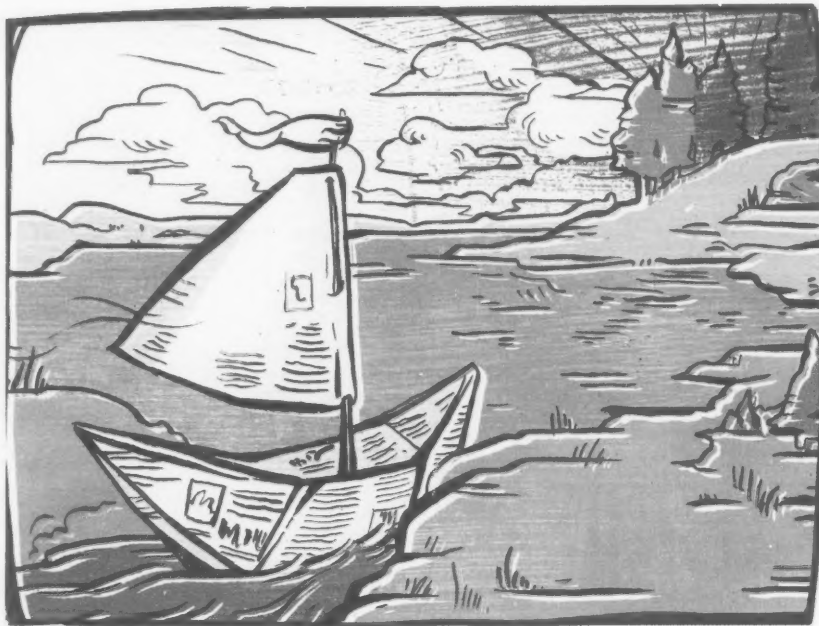


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Currents



Tide Change at Bay Journal

The twentieth anniversary of the *Chesapeake Bay Journal* marks a watershed moment for a publication that knows something about watersheds. Over the last five years, the free monthly newspaper, which covers environmental issues affecting the bay and its environs, has been working hard to expand its reporting and remold its image. ¶ Founded in 1991 by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay—a nonprofit dedicated to protecting the largest estuary in the United States and its watershed, which encompasses Washington, DC, and parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia—the *Bay Journal* has chronicled efforts to restore an ecosystem degraded by man-made pollution

with practically unparalleled attention.

In 2007, the paper entered a new phase when founding editor Karl Blankenship (a veteran of *The Patriot-News* of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania) noticed most of the region's major papers cutting their bay reporters. Blankenship and company launched the Bay Journal News Service, which provides op-eds and articles gratis to hundreds of papers in the area. In 2008 and 2009, the paper hired three former *Baltimore Sun* employees, bringing its staff to six. Then, in March 2010, the *Bay Journal* left the

Alliance for the nonprofit Chesapeake Media Service.

"We didn't want it to seem like the paper was coming from an environmental group," Blankenship says. "We wanted an organization with a more specific journalism mission."

Blankenship is also trying to diversify the *Bay Journal's* funding. Until just a couple years ago, it was financed entirely by the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's regional office. That put the paper, which closely tracks both agencies, in an awkward position.

"Everyone always asks, 'Does the EPA tell you what you have to write?'" Blankenship says. "The answer is, it doesn't, but you can't really affect what some people think. The only thing you can do is increase non-EPA money," which, thanks mostly to foundation and reader support, is now about 30 percent of the budget.

While the *Bay Journal* hasn't been as aggressively critical of the government's role in the bay as some mainstream papers, it has published many detailed articles and op-eds critical of the EPA and other agencies.

The paper has recently expanded its enterprise reporting, producing, for example, an impressive ten-thousand-word, three-part series in late 2010 on the potential for aquaculture to rebuild an oyster population nearly wiped out by disease.

Illustrations by Jacqui Oakley

'Buying an aggregator and calling it a content play is a little like a company's announcing plans to improve its cash position by hiring a counterfeiter.' —Bill Keller, executive editor of *The New York Times*, on the AOL-Huffington Post deal

"In my fourteen years as a reporter for major metros—*The Baltimore Sun* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* among them—I never was able to write anywhere near that much on a topic," says staff writer Rona Kobell.

Next up? Blankenship wants to expand coverage to "upstream" environmental issues not as closely connected to the bay. The *Bay Journal* has 50,000 print readers and 100,000 monthly visitors online; a recent survey revealed 80 percent are already concerned about the Chesapeake environment. Blankenship hopes to reach more of those who aren't. After twenty years, there are still watersheds to cross.

—Curtis Brainerd

Paying Off

AFTER TWO CIVIL WARS, Liberian journalists are enjoying unprecedented freedoms but struggling to maintain independence. The business of news is not yet financially viable there: the media market is oversaturated, advertising is weak, and readership is low with a low-hanging ceiling—only 58 percent of the population is literate. Some reporters earn as little as US \$25 a year. In this environment, *cato* (pronounced "cat-oh"), Liberian vernacular for petty bribes, is rampant, with cash-stuffed envelopes exchanged

for favorable coverage. In February, **Emily Schmall** spoke with **Rodney Sieh**, co-founder and editor in chief of the country's most widely circulated newspaper, *FrontPage Africa*, which started as a US-based website in 2005 before moving to Liberia in 2009. Sieh is taking a stand against the entrenched practice of *cato*. A longer version of their conversation is at www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/paying_off.php.

How is *cato* practiced?

People will call a newspaper asking if they can publish something on the front page and offer a fee for that coverage. And there are journalists who blackmail officials when they have something on them—they can negotiate a price between \$300 to \$1,000, depending on the gravity. It's a sad commentary but that's how most newspapers survive.



Do readers care?

I think it matters what caliber of reporters report the news. Readers want to feel that they are being fed objective news. They want to make sure that

stories aren't tainted or influenced by money.

Who's offered you *cato* for favorable coverage?

I got a call from the former chairman of the transitional government. He wanted to publish commentary and he asked, "Well, how much would it cost?" You can't blame him because they're used to paying people to get things in the paper, but that's not how we operate. I got a call recently from the United Nations Development Program—they had a program coming up and were wondering what it would take to get coverage in the paper.

How has your paper's "no *cato*" policy worked out?

We've fired three or four reporters who took money from people.

Has it improved *FrontPage's* credibility?

Our credibility is solid, thanks to a number of extensive investigative pieces that led to government action. Readers appreciate our efforts in exposing corrupt officials.

Is the media taken seriously in Liberia?

Some media. It comes down to a journalist's body of work. No one can take that away.

It's up to the independent media to set themselves above the rest. With the incident in Ghana [in February, violence broke out at a refugee camp killing one girl] we've been able to get

HARD NUMBERS

30 percent of visitors to local news and information websites that live outside the site's market

25 percent of visitors to those same sites that are "fly-bys" who come to a story from an outside link and may not return for another year, if ever

\$3.75 what the US spent on public broadcasting per capita in 2008

\$90.70 spent by the UK per capita in 2009; Australia spent \$34 in 2008, and Canada spent \$30 that same year

27 percent of bylines in *The New Yorker* that featured women's names in 2010. *TNR* had 16 percent, *TNYRB* 15 percent, *Harper's Magazine* 21 percent, and *The Atlantic* 26 percent.

35 percent of *CJR* magazine bylines in 2010 that were female, according to our back-of-the-envelope math

\$6.95 per month wasn't too high a payroll for *The Augusta Chronicle*: pageviews rose 5 percent on the year before in the three months following December's paywall launch

\$9.95 might have been too much for readers of *SC's Greenville News*: seven months after its July 2010 launch, monthly visits were down 47 percent on the year before

70 percent of subscription revenue from iPad app sales that goes to the media outlet behind it; Apple banks 30 percent

0 percent of iPad audience data that is shared with the outlets by Apple

Sources: Borrell Associates, Free Press, VIDA, Reflections of a Newsosaur, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism's "The State of News Media 2011"

photos from the camp that nobody else had. People said they appreciated it: when the government of Liberia said nobody was killed and they were just using rubber bullets, we showed actual pictures of people being shot with actual bullets.

Why did you leave the US to start this newspaper?

We figured that to become more effective, in terms of getting our message not only to the diaspora audience and beyond Monrovia [Liberia's capital], we would have to get it into the counties. That's our biggest push right now: getting everyone in Liberia to read, and educate them about politics, culture, corruption, and poverty. We've done some good work in terms of exposing corrupt people, and we're going to keep doing it. I think it's something Liberia needs.

Freed Press

WATCHING THE UPHEAVAL in her home region from a Tunis newsroom in late December, *Assabah* reporter Rim Saoudi became frus-

trated. "They wouldn't let us write about them," said Saoudi, thirty, referring to the central Tunisian protests labeled "disturbances" by the government. "When I offered to go, [the editors] sent a reporter they knew would whitewash it instead."

That was then.

Since those disturbances overthrew President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, every aspect of Tunisian civic life, including the media, has changed. There is euphoria among journalists savoring a free press for the first time in twenty-three years. Still, say many, it will take time before those journalists can shake off the past.

"Reporters need to learn how to adapt to this new freedom," says Nouredine Achour, editor of Arabic-language daily *Assabah*, one of Tunisia's biggest newspapers. "There is a lot to do."

For decades, the regime spoon-fed content to reporters who had to mind the "red line." Theoretically, says Saoudi, that meant only staying away from criticizing "The Family"—the presidential family and their relatives.

In practice, it meant only arts and sports stories were safe.

Reporters who crossed this line were threatened, followed, secretly recorded, even imprisoned. Outlets not toeing the line had problems with printers and advertisers afraid of The Family and the state security apparatus.

On January 14, everything changed. At *Assabah*, top management was thrown out—its owner of two years, Ben Ali's son-in-law Sakher el Materi, fled to Dubai. The sixty-year-old paper reverted to public ownership and Achour, who had edited a more independent *Assabah* before Materi removed him two years ago, was reinstated.

While the interim government is still deciding what to do with media outlets once owned by The Family, it has dissolved the Ministry of Information that oversaw and censored the press. And the National Union of Tunisian Journalists has independent leadership again; its board was replaced by pro-government leadership two years ago for being too critical of the media, said Neji Bghouri, its now reinstated leader.

Bghouri, briefly jailed for similar criticism in 2005, says there need to be safeguards to guarantee press freedom, a reform of the press law, and a code of standards and ethics for the press. Shortly after the change in power, the union asked the interim government to create an independent commission for the press to handle accreditation, broadcast licensing, and other regulatory issues. In late February, it got its wish.

But Bghouri's optimism is cautious. "There is more press freedom now but we worry that it can go backward under another government." Reporters too have work to do, he says. "Journalists need to learn to report and write critically now."

Whatever government forms will also require reeducation. "The dictator fell, but the system is still in place," says Saoudi. "It's hard to get any kind of statistics, for example. The people who work in the ministries and other institutions have the same habits—it will take time before things improve."

At *Assabah*, though, the changes are already obvious. There are few traces of the former owner, except the soccer field and tennis courts he installed outside of the building. The paper is full of articles about strikes and the interim government instead of soccer matches and openings attended by First Lady Leila Trabelsi. In the newsroom, reporters chat animatedly about their work. Saoudi, returning from protests near the main government offices, tells a colleague about them before sitting down to write. She won't call them "disturbances" now. She doesn't have to. **CJR**

—Jabeen Bhatti

LANGUAGE CORNER IMPORTANT NEWS

Write LanguageCorner@cjr.org

WRITERS, REJOICE! IT'S PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT by saying "most importantly..." Many people were taught that using "most importantly..." or "more importantly..." was incorrect, especially when beginning a sentence. The scolders said that that "ly" adverb, called a sentence adverb, stood for "what is most (or more) important," so adding the "ly" to the adverb was redundant. Why did it make sense to start a sentence "most surprisingly, it all ended well..." but not "most importantly, it all ended well..."? No matter—if the teachers, or copy editors, wouldn't let you use it, you couldn't. But most happily, you can throw that *shibboleth* away.

In *Garner's Modern American Usage*, Bryan A. Garner says that "writers needn't fear any criticism for using the -ly forms; if they encounter any, it is easily dismissed as picaresque pedantry." Using "more importantly for (what is) more important" is at Stage 5 on his Language-Change Index, meaning it's proper English. And nearly every other usage authority agrees. *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* makes an important distinction, though: "Avoid this construction: *He is tall. More importantly, he is young.* Make it *more important*. The phrase includes an implied *what is* (*What is more important, he is young*). Thus *important* is an adjective modifying *what*."

If you can't figure that one out, don't worry. It's not important.

—Merrill Perlman

LAUREL



In early 2009, the FBI organized a nationwide sting operation to rescue victims of sex trafficking and arrest their pimps. Shockingly, idyllic Portland, Oregon, yielded the

second highest number of arrests and underage victims in the country. The outcry from Portland law enforcement, politicians, and women's and children's advocacy groups was swift and loud. Mayor Sam Adams often said that Portland police saw an average of two cases of child sex trafficking each week. Various factors were blamed in the city-wide dialogue: the local government's lax regulation of strip clubs attracted both prostitutes and johns; Portland's location along a Northwest highway corridor made traffickers' jobs easy.

So in January 2010, when reporter Nikole Hannah-Jones was working the weekend shift at *The Oregonian*, and was assigned to cover the second annual Northwest Conference Against Human Trafficking, she quickly wrote a six-hundred-word story. HUMAN TRAFFICKING INDUSTRY THRIVES IN PORTLAND METRO AREA, the headline read.

Portland's stigma as a "hub" for forced prostitution soon began to receive national attention. Senator Ron Wyden had just introduced a bill to send more funding to Portland law enforcement and to build shelters for trafficking victims. HD-Net aired a melodramatic but thinly sourced episode of *Dan Rather Reports* called "Pornland, Oregon," in which Rather highlighted the irony that "one of the country's most liveable cities" had such a seedy underbelly. Over shots of Portland's railroads, ports, and highways, Rather's voiceover intoned, "Easy transit means easy trafficking, as girls are moved from place to place to keep up with growing demand." ABC's *World News* with Diane Sawyer and *Nightline* produced similar stories. The city's reputation had all but solidified.

On the occasion of the next annual conference, Hannah-Jones decided to write a more in-depth piece on the issue. When she started digging, though, she soon found an even bigger story: none of it was true.

The FBI told Hannah-Jones that the number of underage prostitutes found in Portland during the 2009 sting (seven) was never meant to be used for city-to-city comparisons. Stings could last a month in some cities and one night in others—the result was a snapshot, not a scientific study. The supervisor of the Portland police sex-crimes unit told her that the mayor's two-arrests-weekly figure was false.

National statistics used by local advocates and politicians were merely estimates, or otherwise faulty; the "200,000 to 300,000 US youth" figure cited to quantify the child sex trade was taken from an academic study whose author stressed to

Hannah-Jones that it was a wild guess, extrapolated from interviews with a few hundred teens. Worse, it actually referred to those who were "at risk of sexual exploitation," which included a wide range of crimes, such as molestation by family members. And as for the "transit hub" explanation: well, what major city isn't easily accessible by highway and train?

In short, every single statistic that advocates and politicians had used to justify Portland's label as a "hub" of child sex trafficking fell apart under Hannah-Jones's scrutiny. *The Oregonian* printed the story on its front page on January 14, 2011, with the headline STORY OF 'PORNLAND' IS A MYTH.

Hannah-Jones's editor, Michelle Brence, says she is embarrassed to admit that *The Oregonian* had previously relayed the advocates' statistics. "We had to note in our own stories that we had been among the culprits, reporting some of the bad information," says Brence. But, she says, it was important to correct the record—and the organizations with so much federal funding at stake weren't going to do that.

"The truth is the truth," Hannah-Jones says. "Just because it's a story that pulls on our heartstrings, we can't use false data to draw money into the county. You can't do that."

For Hannah-Jones's thorough and even-handed effort to de-sensationalize this story, *The Oregonian* gets a **LAUREL**.

VILLAGE VOICE MEDIA, TOO, REFUSED TO LET STATISTICS on underage prostitution go unexamined—although in VVM's case, the story hit a little closer to home. VVM-owned backpage.com, a classified-ad website with an adult-services section, has long been a target of an advocacy organization called the Women's Funding Network. Last fall, WFN released a study that found that in just six months in 2010, the number of underage girls trafficked through such sites had exploded.

WN's spokeswoman told Congress that the number of victims in New York had increased by 20.7 percent; in Minnesota, the increase was "a staggering 64.7 percent." These very scientific-sounding statistics were dutifully reported in a wide array of news outlets, including *The Dallas Morning News*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Minnesota Public Radio, and *USA Today*.

City Pages staff writer Nick Pinto's **LAUREL**-worthy exposé "Weird Science," published in March across the entire VVM chain, revealed that the researchers behind the widely-cited data had calculated the number of trafficking victims by first counting online adult-services ads, and then simply guessing at the ages of the girls in the pictures used to advertise those services. And that was about it.

"It was absolutely farcical," says VVM executive editor Michael Lacey. And any reporter "would not have had to be a statistician" to recognize that the methodology was laughably flawed—if, that is, they had bothered to ask. **CJR**

The Smith Rules

Covering the Bulls—for the Bulls

SAM SMITH SAYS HE'S LIVING OUT THE "ULTIMATE JOURNALISTIC FANTASY" after leaving the news business. The former *Chicago Tribune* sports writer, who gained a national following—and, at times, citywide scorn—for his relentless, guileless coverage of the Chicago Bulls during the Michael Jordan era, is blogging hard again about the Bulls—for the Bulls.

It's an odd wedlock, to be sure, and one that justifiably arouses suspicions about what the writer had to give up in order to keep practicing his trade. To hear Smith tell it, he has bridged the holy divide between journalism and public relations with his integrity and incredulousness intact, and with more freedom than he had before. Of course, things are glorious in Chicago these days, with the Bulls enjoying their best season since Michael Jordan won his sixth championship in 1998, so the team and its blogger-in-chief acknowledge that their relationship isn't currently being stress-tested.

In March, when I met the sixty-three-year-old Smith near his home in Aurora, Illinois, he had just returned from Miami, where the Bulls' season-sweeping road victory over the Heat had sent him off on a 2,365-word soliloquy. It was a typical Smith offering: long and obscenely thorough, less a recap than an elucidation of the season as seen through the various subplots of a single game. Among the many things he enjoys, post-newspaper, is that there's no editor to chop up his sentences. "Now, if you read me you know me a little better," Smith says, "because now you can hear my voice better."

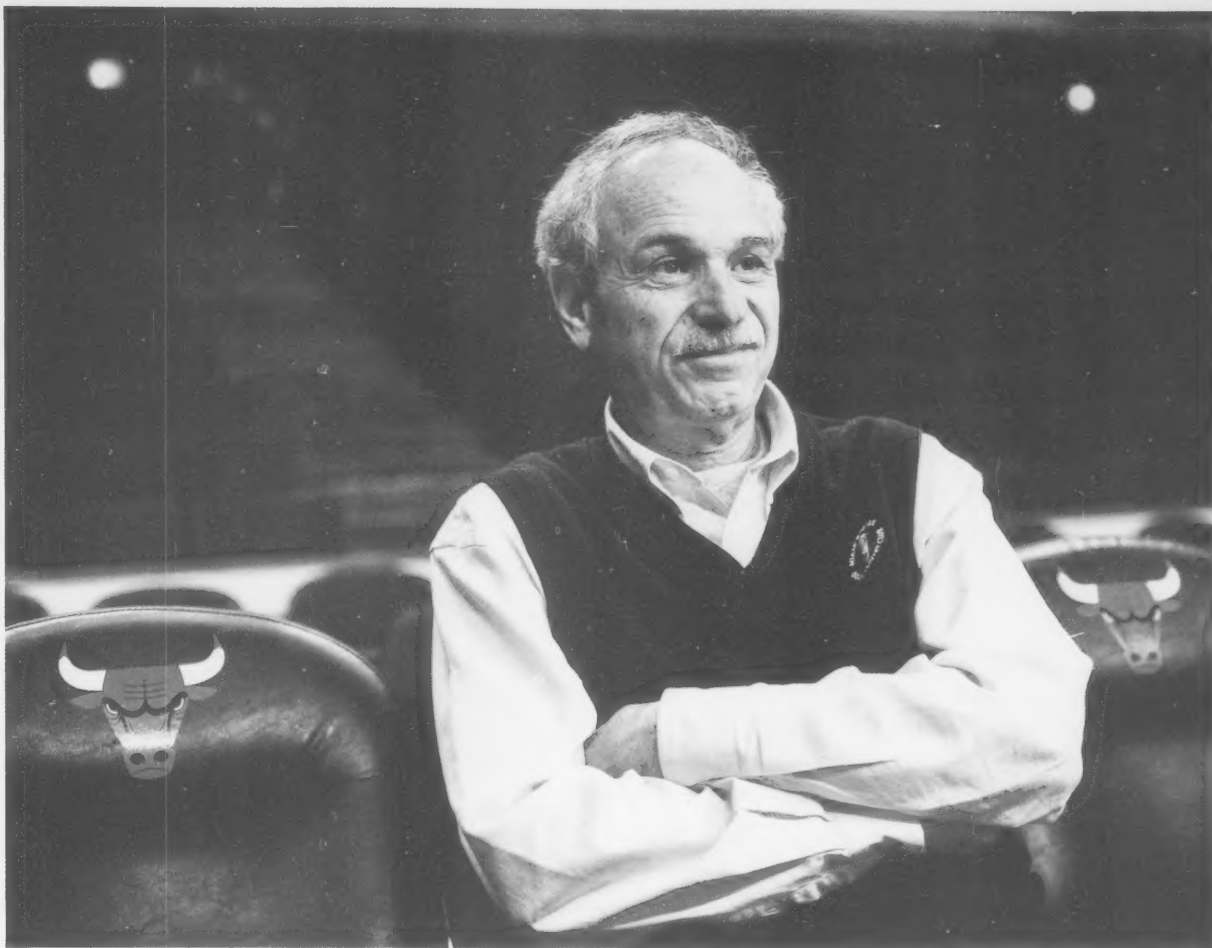
This is not the first time that Smith has gone against the conventional wisdom of his beat. In 1993, he cemented his status as the doyen of Bulls sportswriters with his best-selling book, *The Jordan Rules*, which painted a detailed and not always flattering account of Michael Jordan in his first championship run. By revealing the superstar's petulant and spiteful side, Smith broke something of a sacred vow in Chicago media—*Thou shall not blaspheme His Airness*—and became the target of criticism from some fans and fellow reporters alike. Among the latter, some knocked Smith for saving his goods for a book, as opposed to putting them in the paper, while others condemned him for simply publishing them at all.

Smith has no regrets for the things he put in the book and the things he didn't. "The day *The Jordan Rules* came out," he recalls, "I walked up to Jordan in the locker room and said, 'I just want to let you know if you have any problems with anything, I am glad to talk about it, but I'm going to keep being here.' And to me, that was the thing about *The Jordan Rules*: I didn't write a book and go away. I wrote a book and came back."

Indeed, over the next two decades, Smith served as the *Tribune's* NBA writer, where he continued to burnish his name with a raconteur's accounting of trade deals and coaching hires and general league skullduggery. Smith sometimes seemed to write more of what was going on around the NBA than what many team executives knew.

Smith's former colleagues and competitors say they haven't noticed a change in his writing now, or any evidence of suppression, and roundly say that if you still want to read the best Bulls stuff around—hell, the best NBA stuff around—you better check out Sam Smith.

ONLY ONCE BEFORE IN HIS CAREER had Smith considered crossing the line into the realm of public relations. After starting out as a city hall reporter for the Fort Wayne *News-Sentinel*, he decided to go to Washington to cover politics. He worked for three years at an upstart newswire service, but left after a falling out with the owner. While hunting for new employment, he was offered a job as Connecticut Senator Lowell Weicker's press secretary. Smith liked Weicker—a Rockefeller Republican whose jousts with the Nixon White House earned him the nickname, "The White Knight of Watergate"—but was leery about the job. "The notion then was that if you went to the inside you



Home court Sportswriter Sam Smith on March 21, the night the Bulls clinched their first fifty-win season since 1998

could never get back out, that you were compromised," he says.

But figuring that as long as he didn't stay in it too long "it wouldn't taint" him, he took the job, and, among other things, began squiring leaks from the senator to the columnist Jack Anderson. Five months later, the *Tribune* called with an offer in Chicago and Smith came aboard the general assignment desk. Eventually, he asked to be put on sports, where he hoped to carve out a niche covering pro basketball in a town ruled by baseball and football. And he did.

After twenty-five years at the *Tribune*, Smith's exit came abruptly in the spring of 2008. He says that Mike Kellams, then the *Tribune's* assistant sports editor, raised a vague formal complaint about

him to then managing editor George de Lama, and Smith was summoned to the "principal's office." Nothing much came of this, Smith says, but he read it as writing on the wall. "I loved the job," he says, "but I came to hate where I was doing it." Kellams, now the paper's associate managing editor for sports, has a different recollection of events and says he was never under the impression that Smith felt forced out. In any event, Smith moved to Phoenix, where he did some freelance work. As months passed without a job offer, he reached out first to an NBA team he will not name, and then to the Bulls, asking if he could be of service.

Back in Chicago, Steve Schanwald, the Bulls' executive vice president of

business operations, was confronting the shrinkage of the Chicago sports-journalism scene. "When the *Tribune* started to cut back, as when all sports sections were cutting back, we felt it was leaving a void for us to effectively market our product as we had in the past," says Schanwald. After receiving Smith's e-mail, Schanwald immediately invited him to Chicago. Smith was hired on a two-year deal as an independent contractor, and was told to carry on just as he had done before. According to his contract, there would be no constraints or interference from Bulls brass; his work would appear on the Bulls website and Smith would get the final say on everything he wrote.

The only thing the team insisted on

was that a disclaimer appear on each of his pieces, spelling out his editorial independence and lack of special access. "I just think it is important for anybody who reads what he writes to know that Sam is not a mouthpiece," says Schanwald. "I think it is important for other colleagues in the NBA, when he writes about other players or rumors, to know they aren't coming from the Bulls organization." While Smith refused to discuss the details, within his first month on the job the disclaimer was moved from the bottom to the top of the page after another NBA team raised an issue about something he had written.

Three years later, the team says it couldn't be happier providing one of its most vigilant followers editorial independence on its own web platform. And the returns have been noticeable: the Bulls' website's pageviews increased 8 percent the first year of Smith's blog, which, according to the team, currently accounts for 13 percent of its web traffic.

What if Smith's coverage turns harder? 'If I were writing things that were offensive to the Bulls, I'm sure it would be an issue,' he says.

IN RECENT DECADES, A NUMBER OF EX-sportswriters have left newspapers for communications and PR jobs with the teams they once covered. Smith not infrequently hears from them and their reaction is usually the same: *there is no way in hell my team would let me do what you do.*

Schanwald thinks that if not for Smith, he could have made a similar arrangement with another sportswriter. But Bill Adey, a former *Tribune* and *Sun-Times* sports editor, is not so sure. "Here is a guy who was well established as a personality in town, and especially one that would take controversial stands," says Adey, who now runs Tribune Company's digital side. "So, I think Sam is in a different boat."

What if the Bulls' charmed record takes a turn for the worse next season, and Smith's coverage turns harder? "Sam wouldn't be writing anything that talk show hosts wouldn't be saying, that people wouldn't be writing in newspapers in town," says Schanwald. Smith points out that things weren't so peachy in 2008, when the Bulls, following a season in which they finished .500 and fired their head coach, first reached out to him. And he adds: "If I were writing things that were offensive to the Bulls, I'm sure it would be an issue. But I never felt I was doing that anyway, even when I wrote *The Jordan Rules*."

So is Smith influenced by the entity that signs his checks? Adey thinks Smith's situation is no different than any other reporter's. "Everybody has conflicts," Adey says. "So to me, Sam's are stated and that disclosure is very clear on the site and it is up to me to judge whether I buy that." But Kellams, while attesting to Smith's virtue, adds, "I don't

the scut work of latter-day beat coverage, like in-game tweeting. "I love this arrangement with the Bulls now more than anything I've done in sports," he says, "because I get to write in-depth about things. It is the same concept with *The Jordan Rules*: I get to say what happens, but also why it happened and how it happens."

So far, Smith says he's faced only one losing battle with the Bulls: he's failed to convince the team to leak him information, in spite of multiple attempts. By being an independent contractor, as opposed to an employee, Smith does not have to adhere to the restrictions the NBA places on team personnel. For example, while Bulls management is not permitted to comment on labor negotiations with the player's union, Smith can write about them. (He recalled that at one point, the Bulls ran one of his blog items about collective bargaining by the league, just to make sure.)

"That's why they keep me at arm's length," he says. "They weren't looking at it so much journalistically as to protect themselves from other teams. They didn't want other teams saying this was their words in effect. They wanted deniability."

However it has come to be, Smith feels he's never been freer. When Bulls executive John Paxson and former coach Vinny Del Negro got into an embarrassing scuffle last April, Smith deconstructed the entire affair on his blog.

The same incident snagged the *Tribune's* Bulls beat writer, K. C. Johnson, who was criticized after it was revealed that he knew about the fight weeks before it became public, but opted to sit on it.

Johnson responded in print, writing that his decision was based on a "humane reason," and not for any beat-sweetening journalistic purpose. But Smith—who claims he didn't know about the fight until it was reported elsewhere—won't let his former colleague off so easily. "K. C. did what every good beat writer does," he says. "You measure your priorities." **CJR**

know if discerning fans are ever going to completely trust that stuff."

AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SEASON, Smith re-upped with the Bulls for a three-year contract. He won't say how much he earns but says it is commensurate with what he made at the *Tribune*. The terms of his deal remained the same: he is contracted to cover the Bulls' games, write an NBA notes column on Monday—just as he did at the *Tribune*—and answer reader mail in a Friday column. He posts game follow-ups directly to the website once he's finished them, and the types are all his own.

He spends less time traveling than before, usually watching Bulls road games on TV, and has been able to avoid a lot of

DANIEL LIBIT, a former *Politico* reporter, is a writer in Chicago. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Chicago magazine*.

The Family Owner Rises Again

A tradition of hewing to basics pays off

THE SEATON FAMILY HAD SPENT FOUR GENERATIONS WEAVING A DAISY CHAIN of newspapers across the small towns of the plains states. By the 1990s, they were ready for something bigger. The climate was good. Profits rained upon them. But in those heady days, the sun shone on the whole industry, and large media outfits and investment firms had developed a big appetite for small papers.

From its headquarters at *The Manhattan Mercury* in Manhattan, Kansas, the Seaton Publishing Co. lost bids for newspapers in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Stevens Point, Wisconsin; and Ames, Iowa—all to bigger players. “We made bids on papers we thought were attractive and just got swamped,” says Ned Seaton, the managing editor of the *Mercury*, which his family has owned since 1915. “We weren’t anywhere close.”

In 2007, Ned received a query packet from the newspaper brokerage firm Dirks, Van Essen & Murray containing the financials for *The Daily Sentinel* in Grand Junction, Colorado, which had just been put up for sale by the media giant Cox Communications. The *Sentinel*, with a circulation of 25,000, would have been the biggest addition to date for the Seatons. (Their flagship *Mercury* hovers at around 10,000). Ned ran the numbers and figured that a winning bid for the property would be beyond their means. He threw it in the trash.

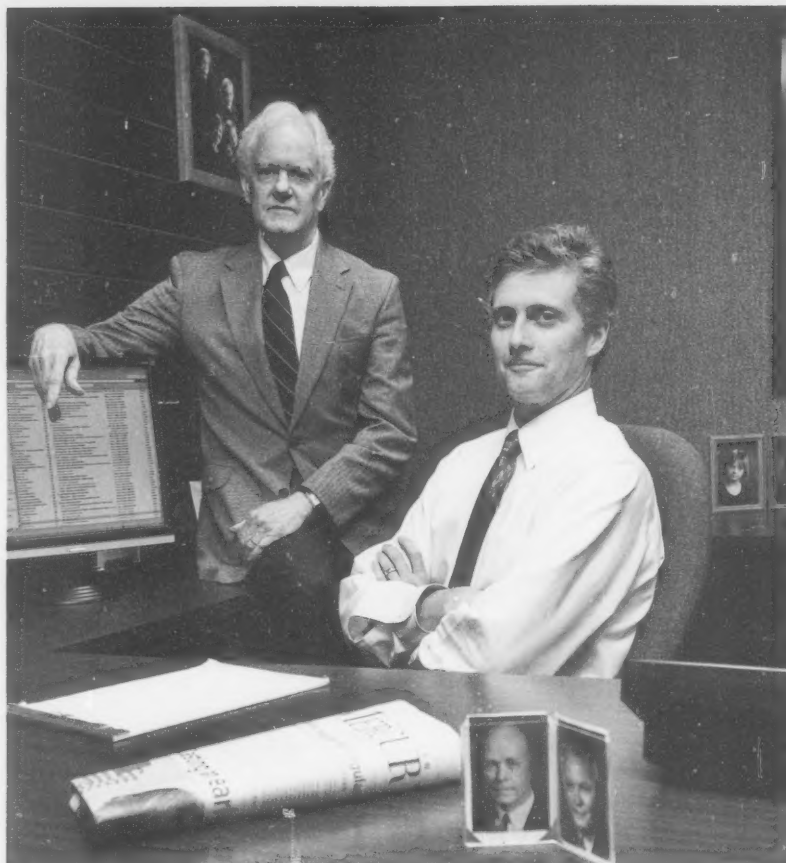
By the end of 2008, however, the Grand Junction paper was theirs—at a price they could only have dreamed of a year earlier. “There was still a decent amount of risk,” Ned says, “but we felt like we got a great deal.” Ned, forty-three, a cautious reporter-cum-businessman with a Harvard degree, had returned to small Seaton Publishing with some reservations in 1996 after working for the likes of The Associated Press, *The Orange County Register*, and the *St. Petersburg Times*. Now he is thankful he made the move. His father, Ed, is the boss, but Ned more or less maps the company’s strategy. He is lean and unpretentious, and so is the Seaton operation. Their building is forty years old and largely windowless. The full-time editorial staff of fifteen toils on old computers bubbling with tube monitors. Some reporters—typically fresh out of college and working for little—use their own laptops. Faded pictures of Ned’s forebears rest atop a bookshelf, reminders of his heritage as a newspaperman. Nearby are reminders of the future: photos of his three children.

Unlike many of the folks he left behind at big outfits, Ned has reason to feel good about where the business is going. That’s because the great crash of 2008-2009 has had an unexpected upshot: a second act for the family-owned newspaper. These smaller newspapers’ price tags are shrinking as the large buyers abandon

print. “The past year and a half we’ve seen a number of family owners step forward and buy papers at very attractive prices,” says Jamie Oldershaw, a senior vice president at Dirks, Van Essen & Murray, the country’s leading newspaper merger-and-acquisition firm.

Faced with loads of debt from newspaper buying sprees over the years, declining ad revenue, and a future fogged by the Internet, some corporate owners are unloading newspaper properties as fast as they snatched them up. Cox Communications held a fire sale in 2009: dropping thirteen papers in North Carolina, two in Texas, and Colorado’s *Daily Sentinel*. The buyers? Private owners, including the Seatons; insurance magnate Clifton Robinson, who is now the local publisher of his hometown Waco, Texas paper; and billionaire John Kent Cooke Jr. The New York Times Company, meanwhile, unloaded the *Times Daily* in Florence, Alabama, to the local Shelton family. In Minocqua, Wisconsin, the Walker family purchased a neighboring paper from BlueLine Media Holdings, which is backed by private equity money, to complement their *Lakeland Times*. And Sample News Group, led by George “Scoop” Sample, recently took three papers from community paper colossus GateHouse Media. And so on.

In total transactions and dollars, these sales are a relative pittance. In 2010, thirteen dailies were sold for a total of \$148.9 million. Compare that to 2008, when total deals were worth \$833.5 million—largely due to one big transaction, the Tribune Company’s Sam Zell moving *Newsday* to Cablevision for \$650 million. But it’s the very absence of those large sales that has come to define the new newspaper world. Big is no longer beautiful. Major metro dailies are facing competition for advertising revenue and audiences. In small towns, papers have loyal audiences and less competition among advertisers. The demographics are right, which basically means the residents are old—less interested in getting news from Gawker and more interested in getting it off the front porch. That’s partly why last year more than three-fourths of the newspapers that found buyers had circulations of less than ten thousand. Those types of papers are making money—even now.



Tradition Ed and Ned Seaton have found success in small papers.

In the 1990s, Dirks, Van Essen & Murray was negotiating sales of papers at ten times (or more) annual earnings—twice what they're going for today—because newspapers were making incredible profits, 25 to 35 percent or more. Corporations wanted in; plenty of family owners got out, making a bundle, thanks to easy credit for corporate borrowers.

Investment firms saw opportunity in small and medium towns, and they fueled companies such as GateHouse Media and American Consolidated Media, which consolidated much of the community newspaper market. The Seatons and, for that matter, the Walkers and the Sheldons and plenty more would have had to leverage their businesses to the brink to compete. So they stood pat. Brown Publishing Company, of Ohio, is one who got in the game. It was aggressive and wound up with a portfolio of dozens of weeklies, dailies, and business journals in Ohio and other states. Then it went bankrupt. American Con-

solidated Media, which owns about a hundred small newspapers, also crashed.

The people buying today are the little guys who were squeezed out in the go-go days of yesteryear and didn't bury themselves in debt. Murray Cohen, who claims a constellation of small papers across the Midwest, is one of them. For years, he coveted the county-seat paper in Van Wert, Ohio, next door to his flagship paper, the *Delphos Herald*, but it belonged to the muscular Brown Publishing. Last year, Cohen finally got the Van Wert *Times Bulletin*—and two others—at Brown's auction. Aside from a small paper in Michigan, the *Times Bulletin* was his first significant acquisition in twelve years. "We bid on a number of papers and we were the unsuccessful bidder," Cohen says, "so when the recession hit, the prices became more realistic."

Cohen is eighty-one years old. He's ridden out more high times and more low times than just about anyone in newspapers. "There hasn't been a re-

cession yet that has bothered us," Cohen says. "Including the last one." That can be said of a lot of small papers. Their relationships with advertisers and readers are intimate. Craigslist is less of a threat. Frequently there are no local television stations to compete for ad revenue and news. Staffs are lean. Some of the papers are so small there's only one full-time employee. With credit now tight, many are getting loans from local banks to fund new acquisitions—also the result of relationships. While the days of 35 percent profits seem to be gone, small newspapers (which are privately owned and don't have to report earnings) say they are still posting healthy returns.

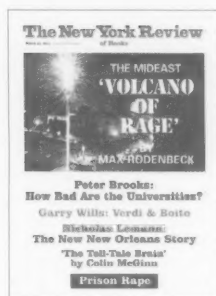
The Seatons of today—various members of whom own papers in Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and most recently, Colorado—believe they've survived because they hewed to the basics. They focus intensely on local news and believe readers reward them by maintaining their subscriptions. Kansas State University and the local Army base, Fort Riley, sustain the town and the *Mercury's* numbers. Circulation levels may also be aided by the subscriber-only website. (Because of the competition for readers, K-State sports stories are free.) Craigslist has decimated the paper's classifieds, nullifying college kids as a source of revenue, but Manhattan has no local television affiliates. So if you want the news in the Little Apple, you're going to have to pay the *Mercury* for it. And local news is what you'll get.

The March 2 issue of the *Mercury* featured one front-page AP story, but only because it concerned Fred Phelps's notorious gay-hating Westboro Church, which is in nearby Topeka. In that morning's budget meeting, Ed and Ned Seaton and two senior editors discussed the census, the school-board budget, and a nearby animal science lab. They anticipated complaints from certain local big wigs, and discussed the recent Rotary meeting. They also got word that day that the *Mercury* had won thirteen first-place Awards of Excellence from the Kansas Press Association for 2010 across a field of writing, editing, and photography categories. **CJR**

BRET J. SCHULTE is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Arkansas.

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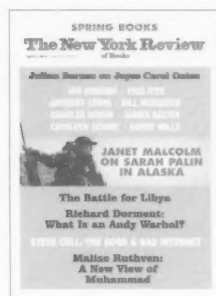
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Breathing Room

Toward a new Arab media

BY LAWRENCE PINTAK

Before there was Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or even Al Jazeera, there was Hama, Syria. It was 1982 and an anti-government protest was put down with ferocious violence. The Syrian government simply destroyed whole sections of the city, leaving at least ten thousand people dead. But the slaughter went unreported in that closed society. Those of us trying to cover the story from nearby Beirut had little more to work with than hearsay, and

certainly no pictures. ¶ Nearly a decade later, when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Saudi media sat on the story for three days while the government formulated its response. And the list goes on. Autocratic Arab governments have long controlled news and information with an iron hand.

No more. They try to do so in 2011, but competing versions of reality seep in—and out—through every electronic pore. There has been much talk of a “Facebook Revolution” and of “The Al Jazeera Revolution,” as some headline writers have described the uprisings that have swept across the Middle East and North Africa since Tunisia erupted in December. Both are over-simplifications. Modern communications gave vent to long-simmering resentments of entrenched autocratic regimes. The Arab world’s youth bubble means that a third of the population is between fifteen and twenty-nine years old, and unemployment among youth is rampant: 31 percent in Tunisia, 27 percent in Egypt, 43 percent in Algeria.

Even in wealthy Saudi Arabia, 16 percent of young adults, many with college degrees from the West, can’t find jobs. And then there is the grinding poverty of the masses. Millions of Egyptians scrape by on less than \$2 a day.

Still, without social media, the sights and sounds of Tunisia’s first tentative protests may never have escaped the confines of the villages where they occurred. Without satellite television, a vision of revolution would never have entered living rooms across the Arab world.

Now we’re in a new phase. As Arab politics are transformed, journalists across the region are assessing their role in this new landscape, warily testing boundaries, adjusting to new realities, and daring to dream of the possibilities.

THE ABILITY OF ARAB AUTOCRATS to control the message first began to weaken in 1996, with the arrival of Al Jazeera, which was always more than a news network. Al Jazeera shook up the region by providing an electronic soapbox for voices long marginalized by state-run broadcasters. The channel’s aggressive style inspired viewers across the region. The revolutions rocking the Arab world are the inevitable outcome.

“Al Jazeera has become an instrument of Arab political empowerment and mobilization,” says Rami Khouri, the director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at The American University of Beirut, and editor at large of Beirut’s *Daily Star*. The network’s sensibility, he continues, emboldened Arabs, making them realize

the anger and frustration they felt were “sentiments shared across the region.”

Wadah Khanfar, Al Jazeera’s director general, says the channel’s editorial policy “gives priority to the grievances and aspirations of ordinary people,” as he put it in a February 25 *Washington Post* op-ed piece. And he’s proud of that.

It was clear to us that a revolution was in the making, and it was happening far from the gaze of a tame and superficial establishment media that allied itself with the powerful center.... Keen to conduct interviews with high-level officials and ever willing to cover repetitious news conferences, they remained oblivious to what was happening on the ground.

At Al Jazeera we have spared no effort to search for the real actors, wherever they happen to be: whether in the cities, in the countryside, in camps, in prisons or in the blogosphere. We have been guided by a firm belief that the future of the Arab world will be shaped by people from outside the aging

elites and debilitated political structures featured so disproportionately by most other news outlets.

The real actors did not appear on most television screens or magazine covers, whether in the Arab world or in Western media. Cameras were not attracted to them; columnists rarely mentioned them. Yet that did not deter them.

The notion of a TV network as a change agent may be jarring to some US news people. Still, journalist-activists like Thomas Paine played a key role in America's own revolution, and oppressive leaders—whether a King George, a Tsar Nicholas, or a Joseph McCarthy—tend to breed journalists agitating for reform. A survey of six hundred Arab journalists in nineteen countries that I conducted three years ago found that 75 percent said their mission was driving political and social change.

That passion for change pervades many Arab news organizations but it is epitomized by Al Jazeera's Arabic channel. On stories like the Egypt revolution, Al Jazeera Arabic wears its "Arabness" on its sleeve. Think Fox News on steroids—but at another place altogether on the spectrum.

Some Arab journalists, such as Daoud Kuttab, the founder of Jordan's Ammanet radio station and an influential commentator on Arab media, are dismissive of Al Jazeera's approach. "There was a lot of ideological comment over pictures of Tahrir Square. There wasn't a lot of solid reporting."

THE PRECISE ROLE OF ARAB MEDIA IN THIS ERA OF TRANSITION is at the heart of the bitter rivalry between Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, the other main pan-Arab news channel. Al Arabiya is owned by Saudi interests close to the royal family, and argues that its news culture is more objective. Journalism "is not about supporting the revolution," says Nabil Khatib, Al Arabiya's executive editor. "It's not about trying to act as a political party who's trying to be activist rather than to offer information." Al Jazeera, he says, is "trying to be part of the conflict."

To some extent, this war of words reflects the political forces at work on the two channels, which are the public faces of the battle for regional influence between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The Emir of Qatar, fifty-nine-year-old Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, launched Al Jazeera one year after he deposed his father in a bloodless coup. Sheikh Hamad didn't start Al Jazeera to gain a membership at the National Press Club. He did it to make himself a player in the region, the same reason that he convinced Washington to shift the regional headquarters of the US military's Central Command from Saudi Arabia to Qatar in 2002. It was from there, just up the road from Al Jazeera's headquarters, that the invasion of Iraq was directed.

When he hired a group of out-of-work former BBC Arabic staffers, gave them \$137 million to start a TV channel, and told them to go out and shake things up, the emir wanted to break the Saudi stranglehold on the region's cross-border media and set himself up as a force to be reckoned with. "All that noise comes from this little matchbox?" Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak commented when he toured the channel a decade ago. Little did he know.

And the emir's strategy has worked. "It is the station that

created the nation," says Hussein Shobokshi, of the pan-Arab daily *Asharq Al Awsat*. "Al Jazeera created Qatar. Nobody had ever heard of Qatar before Al Jazeera." I asked Shobokshi what he thought the emir's reaction might be to see his fellow Arab autocrats toppled like dominoes. "He has a huge smile on his face," the Saudi columnist replied.

Depending on their politics, Arabs tend to line up behind Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya just as Americans follow Fox News or MSNBC, though the complexities of the Arab world— Hamas/Palestinian Authority, Saudi/Qatar, fundamentalist/reformist Muslim, Sunni/Shia, republican/royalist, etc.—means defining their respective audiences is not as simple as the conservative/liberal dichotomy of Fox/MSNBC. Critics say the rivalry for influence between the patrons of the two Arabic channels plays out in news decisions. On topics such as Palestine, for example, Al Jazeera is said to favor Hamas over the Palestinian Authority, while Al Arabiya takes the opposite tack. In Egypt, pro-Mubarak forces claimed Al Jazeera was overtly fostering revolution, while anti-Mubarak demonstrators accused Al Arabiya of going soft on the regime.

Political influence can also be seen in stories on which the two networks adopt a similar approach. For example, critics claim both channels have played down the violent suppression of anti-government demonstrations on the tiny island emirate of Bahrain.

A possible explanation: in both Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Sunni Muslims are the majority. In Bahrain, the uprising is led by the majority Shiites against the Sunni royal family—which immediately raised the specter of Iranian subterfuge. "They gave lip-service to representing the Shiites in Bahrain, but they really downplayed the whole issue of the protests," says Daoud Kuttab. "On Bahrain we saw that they weren't independent."

But that begs a big question in Arab journalism: Is anyone truly independent? The short answer: every Arab news organization operates within "red lines," boundaries of coverage they dare not cross. But lately, those lines have been moving.

ON DAY TWO OF THE EGYPTIAN UPRISING, THE STAFF OF Cairo's privately owned satellite channel ON-TV gathered to discuss strategy. ON-TV was founded in 2008 by Naguib Sawiris, an Egyptian telecommunication mogul, as a current-affairs spin-off of his successful entertainment channel. Yosri Fouda, host of the nightly talk show, *Akhir Kalam* (*The Last Word*), had just met with the station's program chief. Fouda was one of the Arab world's most respected television journalists. He had made his name as Al Jazeera's chief investigative correspondent and was best known in the West as the reporter who interviewed the masterminds of 9/11. "I told him, 'I'm not going to destroy everything I did in my career by appearing on TV and be a parrot. At the same time, I won't be upset if you want me to take a break.'"

But his boss told Fouda he did not intend to self-censor. The team developed an aggressive strategy for coverage of the uprising and brought it to Sawiris, warning him that if they took this approach, ON-TV could be shut down. "To his



See no evil? Hands off Al Jazeera

credit, Naguib said, 'Guys, if you think we can do this professionally, then I don't care if we get shut down,' Fouda recalls.

While Al Jazeera and other regional satellite channels received most of the attention in the West, ON-TV and Dream-TV, another Egypt-based private satellite channel, played a major role in bringing the voices of the revolution to the Egyptian audience. Like other Egypt-based channels, ON-TV and Dream were prohibited from running news programs by the Mubarak regime. Instead, they focused on current-affairs discussion programs. So while the regional channels concentrated on live coverage from the street, these channels were bringing into the studio all of the key figures involved in the revolution, giving context and depth to the unfolding events. This was a level of analysis that might have been lost on viewers in other parts of the region, but was critical for Egyptians trying to understand the subtleties of their unfolding future.

"Dream, at the beginning, was playing both sides of the fence," says Hani Shukrallah, editor of the English-language Ahram Online. "But they jumped over completely once it was clear the revolution was winning. ON-TV from the start was a breath of fresh air." Westerners who followed the Egypt story are likely to recall the memorable clip of Google executive

Wael Ghonim breaking down in tears when he was shown pictures of Egyptians who died while he was in jail. That moment occurred during an interview with Dream's Mona el Shazly.

Naila Hamdy, a journalism professor at The American University in Cairo, observes that Egyptian private satellite stations became stars during this period—and the effect continues. These channels are becoming an integral part of the nation's suddenly complex political conversation as Egypt moves toward its first truly free elections.

In fact, there is a strong potential for independent, nationally focused satellite channels, like those in Egypt, to one day supplant regionally focused channels, such as Al Jazeera, as viewers in individual countries look for those outlets that provide news about events down the street, rather than on the other side of the Arab world. The criticism of the pan-Arab channels has long been that they often focus myopically on broad regional stories like the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Iraq, while they ignore bread-and-butter local issues. In a candid self-assessment, Nabil Khatib of Al Arabiya says the quality of reporting and relative freedom are what gave the pan-Arab stations their audience, but "once those local stations become more free and learn how to be better in terms of professional standards, we will lose."

Whether the pan-Arab channels have more freedom than their newly unshackled nation-based competition is already in question. As he wrapped up the February 12 edition of his program, *Studio Al Qahira* (Cairo Studio), the host, Hafez Mirazi of Al Arabiya, told his viewers that the following day's program would focus on the implications of the Egyptian revolution for Saudi Arabia. He did not make this announcement lightly. A former Washington, DC, bureau chief for Al Jazeera, Mirazi had left that network complaining about what he saw as a news agenda manipulated by the Qatari government. Now he was hosting a program on Al Jazeera's main rival, owned by businessmen close to the Saudi royal family. Mirazi knew he had traded one master for another.

But, he told his viewers, the discussion of potential Saudi unrest was a test. "If we can do that, then Al Arabiya is an independent channel. If not, I bid you farewell and thank you for watching our show." Mirazi was never put back on the air.

"Egyptian journalists used to appear on Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya because the channels were the freest in the region," Mirazi told me. "We knew there are limits, because you can't talk about the emir or the king, but for us it didn't matter," he said. "But now, since Egypt is liberated and the Egyptian media is liberated, there is no excuse for any one of us to accept red lines from another station on their government while we don't have red lines on our own government."

Mirazi's ex-boss, Al Arabiya news chief Nabil Khatib, says the host was using the live show to push his personal agenda. "He blackmailed his own channel," Khatib claims. Even some of Mirazi's friends think he was grandstanding. Still, I asked Khatib whether Al Arabiya had done any stories on the topic Mirazi had proposed: the effect of the Egyptian revolution on Saudi Arabia. "Nobody had the chance nor the need to have an hour on air about the possible impact of Egypt on Qatar, nor on Saudi, nor on Morocco," he insisted. Other news organizations that have tackled such stories would disagree.

English Lesson

The moment has arrived for Al Jazeera English, except in the US

Back in November 2008, I skewered Al Jazeera English's live coverage of election night in the US in an article for CJR.org. "It was a bit like watching a local college TV station try to compete with the big boys," I wrote, somewhat brutally. "No matter how hard they try, it's just not the real thing." ¶ But with the Egyptian revolution, Al Jazeera English has come of age. The channel's 24/7 coverage had no English-language rival.

Even Hillary Clinton noticed. "Viewership of Al Jazeera is going up in the United States because it's real news," the Secretary of State told a Senate panel in March. "You may not agree with it, but you feel like you're getting real news around the clock instead of a million commercials and, you know, arguments between talking heads."

That was music to the ears of Al Anstey, managing director of Al Jazeera English. He leads a team of more than 550 journalists in thirty bureaus worldwide, supplemented by another forty bureaus operated by Al Jazeera Arabic. "It comes down to the core strength, which is eyewitness reporting," says Anstey, a British national who has worked for CBS News and Sky News.

The words "Al Jazeera" in the name are both a strength and an Achilles heel for Al Jazeera English, or AJE, which was founded in 2006, a decade after the Arabic channel. The name Al Jazeera opens doors across the Middle East and beyond. A quarter of a billion homes around the world have access to AJE. India is among the latest to pick up the service.

But so far the name and its associations have prevented the channel from penetrating the US market. Many Americans see Al Jazeera as foreign at best and a mouthpiece for al Qaeda at worst.

The crux of the problem in getting cable and satellite clearance is that providers have seen little upside and a big downside to carrying AJE. Not much demand—i.e., profit—but a near-certainty of pushback from conservative and pro-Israel camps in the form of letters, bad publicity, and potential boycotts.

Only viewers in Washington, DC; Toledo, Ohio; and Burlington, Vermont—the three locations where a service provider offers AJE—could watch the channel's Tunisia and Egypt coverage on TV. The rest had to go to the web. And they did that in droves. Web traffic for the channel went through the roof after the start of the January 25 uprising in Egypt, at 10 million minutes a day, almost half from the US.

WITH THAT SPIKE, AJE LAUNCHED A renewed "Demand Al Jazeera" campaign to rally viewer support, running full-page newspaper ads and flying top executives to the US for meetings with leading distributors.

"We need to address the misconceptions about what Al Jazeera stands for," says Anstey, "and that is dispelled the minute anyone watches us."

Indeed, aside from less focus on US and European news, Al Jazeera English feels much like its main rivals, BBC

World television and CNN International (a parallel CNN operation rarely seen in the US). While Al Jazeera Arabic proudly wears its Arab identity on its sleeve, Al Jazeera English is arguably the closest thing to borderless journalism in the world today. Its staff is the media equivalent of the UN, many of them refugees from Western television channels. Name the country and it is probably represented in the AJE newsroom.

Ayman Mohyeldin, an Egyptian-American reporter who anchored much of AJE's coverage from Cairo, says the difference between the English and the Arabic channels is tied to their respective audiences. "The Arab viewer doesn't want just news, they want something a little bit more polemic," explains Mohyeldin. "They want to feel they have someone who is fighting on their behalf." AJE's tone is different, he says, because it is speaking to the whole world.

ABC News veteran Dave Marash worked as an anchor in Washington, DC, for Al Jazeera English when it launched. After he left, he criticized what he felt was the channel's "stereotypical and shallow" coverage of the US. Today, he says, it has matured. Although he is troubled by the lack of "vigor and airtime" AJE has given the Bahrain story, Marash still agrees with Clinton that AJE is putting the American networks to shame. "I think that just as ten years ago CNN was the role model, and thirty years ago it was the BBC, today AJE is the model of television news coverage," he says.

The fact that Bahrain largely dropped off AJE's news lineup in early April was not lost on some AJE insiders. But Anstey insists it reflects nothing more than the press of events elsewhere.

Indeed, in hundreds of conversations with AJE executives and staff since its launch, I have rarely heard anyone complaining of an unseen hand skewing coverage. And the political skew that colors some stories on Al Jazeera Arabic seems largely absent from Al Jazeera English.

The likely reason: the emir of Qatar is a savvy guy. He wants Al Jazeera English to do for him on a global scale what Al Jazeera Arabic has done for him in the region: make him a player. If Al Jazeera English is seen as a mouthpiece, his money will have been wasted.

—Lawrence Pintak

But the Al Arabiya news chief acknowledged the limits he faced in reporting the spreading turmoil. "Let me be frank," he said, "political structures in the Arab world are not ready for those revolutions, nor for any coverage of those revolutions." And, "as much as they put security pressure on the protests, they put political pressure on the media." He recounted a phone call he received from Egyptian Information Minister Anis Feki at the height of the protests. He was "shouting at us, 'stop covering Egypt,'" and warned that "somebody will come and they may attack you. I cannot control things." Not long after, Al Arabiya's Cairo bureau was stormed and shut down by pro-Mubarak sympathizers who beat up one reporter and kidnapped another.

Over at state-run Egypt TV, the pressure was even more intense. At times, watching ETV during the protests was like watching an alternate reality. On January 28, Al Jazeera showed a split screen—live images of a police vehicle on fire outside the gates of ETV as protestors clashed with police. This, next to ETV's own live signal showing a calming panoramic shot of the city.

"We were given press releases from the ministry of interior right from the first day and we were told to say exactly as we were told," recalls Shahira Amin, the former anchor and deputy head of ETV's English-language Nile TV. Instead, she resigned. "I decided I had to choose. I was either a mouthpiece for the regime or I was on the people's side, and that's why I quit."

ETV News chief Abdelatif el Menawi admits that it was difficult to know whom to obey. "Many powers were confronting each other and each of these powers had its own opinion or goal. We had the presidential palace, ministers, army, intelligence, the street—and every one of them was pushing in a direction. And we were in a situation trying to adjust to keep the TV and Egypt safe." The pressure, he says, was tremendous. "Nobody can imagine." Like *Al Ahrām* and other state-controlled newspapers, ETV did an about-face when it became clear Mubarak's days were numbered.

Not long after my conversation with Menawi, I received an e-mail from Shahira Amin. She asked whether I thought she should go back to work for Egypt TV. Attached was a note she had just sent to her old boss, Menawi. "I salute you for your steadfastness and courage in the face of adversity," she told him, adding that she was ready to consider coming back "with my head held high."

THE EGYPTIAN MEDIA MAY HAVE WON SOME BREATHING room, but one question is, For how long?

"A couple of days ago, I was slightly more optimistic. I'm not sure now," Yosri Fouda, of ON-TV, told me in late February when I caught him just after he got off the air. The Information Ministry had been dissolved, but army officers were over-seeing the media, and I asked if he was being pressured by the new military rulers. "Not directly, but you feel the heat," said Fouda, who felt his reputation afforded a degree of protection.

Two months later, things became even more complex. In mid-April, the same week Mubarak and his sons were arrested on orders of the country's interim military rulers and blogger Maikel Nabil was sentenced to three years in prison for "insulting the military," the so-called Supreme Council distributed a letter to Egyptian editors ordering them not to report on the armed forces without advance permission. "Freedom of expression is guaranteed as long as it is respectful and doesn't question the armed forces," Ismail Etman, head of the armed forces' moral affairs unit, told a news conference.

The Committee to Protect Journalists condemned the order, which it said "effectively institutionalizes a military censorship regime in Egypt." But Egyptian journalists say the restrictions are not as cut-and-dried as they might seem to



Headline News Readers at Tahrir Square

outsiders. The backstory on the edict underscores the evolving relationship between the armed forces and the media in the new Egypt. "The military was the one remaining red line in Egyptian journalism in the past five years," explains *Ahrām Online's* Hani Shukrallah. The generals tolerated the flak they have taken since assuming political power, but the breaking point came when troops entered Tahrir Square on April 8 to arrest a group of uniformed army officers who were speaking out against the generals. To the Council, that was mutiny, and the crackdown, which left two civilians dead, was purely an internal army affair. The move set off a media firestorm, particularly in the blogosphere. "They have a level of tolerance if you criticize their political decisions, but if you talk about the army as such, internal army reform or internal corruption, that is a no-no," according to Shukrallah, who adds that "most journalists, including myself, would rather keep that file closed for the moment."

Hisham Kassem, a founder of the leading independent daily *Al Masri Al Youm*, agrees, but says that reading tea leaves becomes tiresome. "It's so much easier to come out and say, 'This is unacceptable,' than to make this very ambiguous statement which people are interpreting in different ways,"

Kassem says. Adds Fouda: "You really have to walk a very fine line."

Elsewhere in the region, regimes and their loyalists continue to lash out at reporters and bloggers: the deaths in Bahrainian custody of the founder of the nation's leading independent daily and a blogger there, the detention of journalists and hacking of news websites in Syria, the disappearance of reporters in Libya, and their murder in Yemen. Across the Arab world, many regimes believe the solution to their problems is to kill the messenger, or at least jail her. Still, many Arab journalists interviewed for this article feel that there has been a fundamental transformation in Egypt and Tunisia that will ultimately resonate across the region.

"It's a complete change. Complete," says Abdul Wahab Badrakhan, a former editor at the Saudi-owned, pan-Arab daily *Al Hayat*, referring to newspapers in the two countries. "The headlines, the front page, even the editorial page are now richer in news." He believes this replacement of propaganda with actual reporting represents "a deep change in the practice of journalism in the Arab world."

While Al Jazeera has been credited for the growing willingness of Arab journalist to push the envelope, a sort of "Al Jazeera effect," the coming years could well see the rise of an "Egypt Effect," as a freer Egyptian media reclaim their historic role as agenda-setters for the region. "The Egyptians are coming back, this time even better than before," Hafez Mirazi boasts.

Daoud Kuttub is less sanguine. "I am not as optimistic as Hafez that it will just be the push of a button," he says. "A lot of work has to be done."

Beyond Egypt, Hussein Shobokshi, the *Asharq Al Awsat* columnist, believes Arab media are going to be "more liberalized, the ownership structure is going to change, you'll see more private ownership," he says. "The dinosaurs are going to fade away." Not that he doesn't worry. Shobokshi fears the newfound freedom could be squandered if the media do not move beyond inaccuracy, innuendo, and incitement. "We're watching with a bit of concern and shock the malicious attacks that are taking place from reputable talk shows and columnists and journalists in Egypt," he says. "That has created a very ugly environment" with unsubstantiated accusations and name-calling against former members of the Mubarak regime.

"Actually, it's disgusting," says Mirette Mabrouk, founder of the *Daily Star* of Egypt (now *Daily News Egypt*). "As much as this revolution has brought forth wondrous things, it's unearthed a great many creepy-crawlies."

At the state media organs, says Hani Shukrallah, the politics may have changed but the lack of professionalism has not. "*Ahram* [his site's Arab-language sister newspaper] today is still as bad in professional terms as it used to be. It was professionally extremely poor when it was pro-government and now it's still poor and pro-revolution."

That lack of professionalism isn't confined to state-controlled media. Few journalism schools exist in the region and most Arab journalists are poorly trained. In my survey, mentioned earlier, Arab journalists said a lack of professionalism was the greatest threat to the industry; journalistic corruption, driven by poor salaries, was also a major concern. The average

starting salary at many media outlets in the region is a few hundred dollars a month. That means journalists can be bought.

The free-for-all in the Egyptian media has underlined the fact that a free media is not necessarily a credible media. "The challenge now is to develop professional standards," Shukrallah says, "and sovereign institutions."

Systemic journalistic change will require societal change, and that will not happen overnight. Almost every Arab country has media laws that mean journalists can be jailed for perceived insults to the ruler, the "nation," and, in some cases, Islam. As the red lines around the Egyptian military underscore, true reform is impossible until the governments themselves embrace it.

BUT MEANWHILE, THE ROLE OF THE ARAB JOURNALIST is being redefined. Egypt's bloggers have long straddled the line between political activists and citizen journalists as they reported stories off-limits to the mainstream media. The revolution institutionalized that role. In Bahrain, where blogger Zakariya Rashid Hassan al Ashiri died in custody in April, online activists are filling the void created by stifled mainstream news organizations; in Tunisia, a leading blogger is now minister of youth and sport; in Yemen, bloggers share prison cells with mainstream journalists for similar trumped-up offenses.

Across the region, especially in Gulf countries with high Internet penetration rates, "citizen journalists" online are tapping into that bubble of young Arabs, many of whom never pick up a newspaper since they don't trust the content. If mainstream media organizations fail to both break the bonds of government control and make the digital shift, they may cede an entire generation of readers.

When it comes to the state-controlled media, one challenge is their bloated bureaucracies. Egyptian Radio and TV have more than forty thousand employees. *Al Ahram's* reporting staff alone numbers fourteen hundred. Neither has much prospect of privatizing. ETV's Menawi hopes the future lies in a PBS-style public-broadcasting model, but even he is skeptical that any state-run media organization would suddenly adopt a true "public interest" model. There are many challenges.

But while they may disagree on ideology or the angle of tomorrow's story, most Arab journalists would concur that, at some level, the future of Arab journalism is being written in Cairo.

"I believe if the Egyptian revolution will succeed, it will dramatically change the overall scene of democracy in the Arab world," says Nabil Khatib of Al Arabiya. That, in turn, "will affect the media itself. And will raise the bar, push the boundaries. And will help all of us to become better, to become more informative, and treat what is of concern to the public." **CJR**

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Anybody There?

A phone-hacking scandal grows despite a very quiet Fleet Street

BY ARCHIE BLAND

When Rebekah Wade, then editor of the *News of the World*, felt that her newspaper had not been nominated for enough British Press Awards in 2002, she did not call her senior staff together to discuss how they might do better next year. She did not hire any new reporters. She did not congratulate her rivals who had been better favored. ¶ Wade, who is now Rebekah Brooks, and Rupert Murdoch's senior lieutenant in the UK, took particular umbrage

at the absence of her storied investigations editor, Mazher Mahmood—known as the ‘fake sheikh’ for his preferred gotcha disguise—from the prize short lists. And so what she did was this: She paid the £3,000 or so it costs for a couple of tables at the starry awards do. Then she barred her staff from attending. Accordingly, when staffers from *The Sun*, the *News of the World*'s Murdoch-stablemate, stood on their chairs to chant “Fix! Fix! Fix!” as the *Daily Mirror* swept the boards, the only witness sitting at either of her tables was a hapless intern sent along in full robes and a headdress in Mahmood's honor. Even in the colorful history of the awards, where punch-ups and slanging matches are ten a penny—*The New York Times*'s Sarah Lyall once wrote that the awards less resembled a celebration of journalism than a “soccer match attended by a club of misanthropic inebriates”—it was somewhat unusual. The Pulitzer Prize winners' luncheon, you cannot help but feel, has never seen anything like it.

For Wade and the *News of the World*, on the other hand, such drama was in those days fairly ordinary, and just as likely to occur in the getting of its stories as the feting of them. The most infamous of Britain's bumptious tabloids, its circulation of 2.7 million is 700,000 more than its nearest Sunday rival. Fed by a diet of celebrity skin and moral outrage, it has reigned unchallenged for as long as anyone can remember. The other tabloids wish they could emulate it; the broadsheets wish they didn't have to try.

Under those circumstances, you would imagine that the news in August 2006 that agents of the paper had been illegally accessing Buckingham Palace voicemails would trigger a gleeful pile-on amongst its Fleet Street rivals. The case for broader retribution in the most ruthless media market in the world only got stronger when *The Guardian* reported in 2009 that thousands of others had had their voicemails illegally accessed. And in 2010, when a team of *New York Times* reporters produced an article making it still clearer that the rot had spread from the *News of the World* to Scotland Yard and the Prime Minister's office, the press attention could reasonably have been expected to reach fever pitch.

But to this day, there has been no such savaging. As responsibility for the sins of News International, the British print arm of Murdoch's global media empire News Corporation, has edged further and further up the food chain, the vast majority of the British press have done their utmost to look the other way. That careful silence allowed the

company's initial defense—that wrongdoing was confined to a couple of bad apples—to stand for years longer than it should have. And it left many key questions unanswered: among them, whether the so-called phone hacking was still going on, whether it took place at other publications, and whether Rebekah Brooks, now chief executive of News International, had sanctioned the practice in her time as editor. Today the taint of scandal is getting ever closer to Brooks. If a crop of pending lawsuits from hacking victims successfully pins responsibility on her and her fellow senior managers, News Corporation's already considerable legal exposure could balloon to many millions of pounds.

The explanations of that silence—and of its consequences—tell us something just as disturbing about Britain's media as the phone hacking itself. And they suggest that the feral behavior on show at the annual awards jamboree was only the tip of the iceberg.



On the line Rupert Murdoch has stood by Rebekah Brooks despite growing suggestions that phone hacking took place on her watch.

Rats and Reptiles

British tabloids have never been well mannered. In the pursuit of stories, reporters at the red-tops (and, indeed, at many of their more stately broadsheet rivals) have pushed the boundaries of the acceptable for decades. "There's been a culture of misbehavior for a long time," said Roy Greenslade, a former editor of the *Daily Mirror* who now writes a media blog for *The Guardian*. "Stealing pictures from mantelpieces, conning your way into people's homes, dressing up as doctors, all of that." Such conduct "was disgraceful, vulgar, absurd," Greenslade said. "But it wasn't illegal."

There are plenty of examples of reporters going to extreme lengths to satisfy exacting news desks without quite veering into obvious criminality. There was the tabloid freelancer who hid in a church organ for several days, defecating in a plastic bag, to get pictures of Madonna's baby's christening; there was the time Rebekah Brooks, then a lowly reporter, disguised herself as a cleaner to infiltrate

the newsroom of a sister publication and nab a copy of their scoop.

But the great tapestry of tabloid infamy has always been viewed as an entertaining appendage to public life, mischievous rather than malicious. The UK press looks across the Atlantic and—with, to my British sensibility, some justification—views a moribund print culture that spends more time pontificating about morals than getting stories and making them interesting to readers. As the former *Times* editor and *Guardian* columnist Simon Jenkins once put it, "I was trained as a reptile lurking in the gutter whose sole job was 'to get the bloody story.'" Not for nothing does the trophy for the country's most prestigious investigative journalism award, the Bevens Prize, show a determined rat nosing up a drainpipe.

When the first signs of the *News of the World* phone-hacking scandal came to light in 2006, the paper and News International sought to frame it as just another notch in this exuberant history. It was certainly not a matter that seemed

likely to bring the newspaper group to the brink of disaster. It began with a brief diary item about Prince William's knee, detailing how he'd strained a tendon during a game of soccer, and paid a visit to the doctor. For royal editor Clive Goodman, who reportedly held the newspaper's record for the most consecutive lead stories on the front page, it was small beer.

Trivial as it was, though, it prompted questions amongst the royals. Only a very few people, all of them trusted confidantes, had known about the doctor's appointment. Barring a senseless and implausible betrayal, there seemed to be no legitimate way that the story could have been sourced. The next week, the royals' suspicions were confirmed: another story appeared, also in the *News of the World*, also by Goodman, and again only known by a trusted few. The only recorded mention of it had come in a voicemail message. A police investigation discovered Goodman had been using Glenn Mulcaire, a private investigator paid by the paper, to access the messages of famous people who had not changed their phone's default remote access code. Goodman apparently felt so secure in the practice that he was unconcerned about using the technique to write stories that could not have been obtained by any other means.

But by the *News of the World's* account, it was a "rogue incident." The newspaper robustly defended itself as an ethical organization, insisting that only eight people had been hacked, and that Mulcaire and Goodman, who were sent to jail, had been operating on their own initiative. When Andy Coulson, who succeeded Brooks as editor in 2003, resigned, he did not admit any knowledge or responsibility, and instead portrayed the decision as a simple matter of honor. The lingering whiff of scandal did not prevent him from becoming the Conservative Party's director of communications in July 2007. And although there were inevitable questions over whether the practice had begun during Brooks's reign, she managed to ride them out.

At the time, the subject was treated as a niche media story rather than a matter of broad public interest. "It was scarcely reported," said Peter Osborne, a respected political columnist for the *The Daily Telegraph* who hosted a 2010 documentary on the hacking. "It was as if it was something of incredibly minor importance. It was always well back on the inside pages, lost in a few paragraphs if it was mentioned at all."

So it would remain for two years. Then, in July 2009, *The Guardian's* Nick Davies wrote the first piece describing the true extent of the phone-hacking scandal. Davies uncovered evidence suggesting thousands had been victims, ranging from celebrities to politicians to ordinary people—including the parents of murdered children, it was later claimed—who had happened to find themselves caught up in something the *News of the World* thought was interesting. His story revealed that News International had quietly paid out more than £1 million in a series of cases brought by alleged hacking victims, settled on the condition that they sign gag orders. Furthermore, the article claimed that many victims were never informed by London's Metropolitan Police, which had close ties to the paper, that their phones had been targeted. Later, it would be revealed that the Met held information that suggested other reporters were involved, but, possibly

fearing retribution from an organization that Brooks had once told a parliamentary committee had paid police officers for information, failed to act on it. (Assistant Commissioner Andy Hayman, who led the widely-criticized operation, later left the police to work for Murdoch's *Times* as a columnist.)

British newspaper proprietors have enjoyed a longstanding tradition of covering each other's travails as minimally as possible.

Davies hoped other newspapers would join the hunt. "If you have one story that exposes wrongdoing by the media, by the police, by the political classes, that's wonderful, isn't it?" he said. "But no one followed it up at all."

Silence on Fleet Street

Why? To some close observers, the answer is obvious. "Lots of people were doing it," said Dominic Ponsford, editor of the *Press Gazette*, a trade publication. "They think the best thing to do is let sleeping dogs lie." *The New York Times's* Don Van Natta Jr., a former London-based investigative correspondent who returned as part of a team assigned to the scandal, was shocked by what seemed to be a widespread reliance on such methods. "It was probably worse than I had thought, and done more openly, and more systematically," he said. "And I had the very clear sense that it was not just the *News of the World*."

British newspaper proprietors have enjoyed a longstanding tradition of covering each other's travails as minimally as possible, lest wounded rivals take revenge. Seven of the people I spoke to in the reporting of this story used some variation on the phrase "dog doesn't eat dog."

According to reporters across Fleet Street, it is clear that there can be negative professional consequences for those who report this kind of story—though there is never a need to make that fact explicit. "It would have been an absolute joke if someone had pitched it—they would have been laughed at, treated with suspicion, even," said a journalist who used to work at Associated Newspapers, publishers of the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday*, two newspapers also renowned for a certain ruthlessness in pursuit of a scoop. "Everyone knew that that was the state of affairs."

Besides the aversion to the story at a senior level, there's a sense that in London's incestuous media scene there are simply too many journalists at any given paper who at some point or another will have been involved in similarly ques-

tionable activities. "There's an acceptance that what was going on was dodgy," says a staffer at Mirror Group, which publishes the *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror*, and *The People*. "But a lot of people know the people. And there's so much crossover. There are lots of stories that people [at Mirror Group] are tied up in this."

In November 2009, the Press Complaints Commission, a voluntary regulator frequently derided as toothless, declared that there was no new evidence of phone hacking at the *News of the World*. (*Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger resigned from the body in protest.) Davies's follow-ups failed to get traction. Andy Coulson stuck to his guns and hung on to his politically sensitive job despite mounting evidence suggesting that if he had indeed operated in blissful ignorance of his underlings' criminal activity, he had been an utterly incompetent top editor.

An American Intervention

That the situation changed does no great credit to the British press. In March 2010, *The New York Times* dispatched Van Natta, Jo Becker, and Graham Bowley to London. They would break the story back open.

"Within the first couple of days of reporting, it was clear that there was radio silence on this throughout the British press," Van Natta said. "Even *The Guardian* had let go a little bit. That was an advantage for us, quite frankly."

Given the luxury of six months of reporting, the trio unearthed explosive quotes from Sean Hoare, a former reporter and close friend of Coulson who had left the *News of the World* under a cloud of drink and drugs. He said he had been actively encouraged by Coulson to raid voicemails. Other staffers painted a picture of an office where phone hacking was pervasive and unmissable. "Everyone knew," one of them was quoted saying. "The office cat knew."

The piece gave the story new life, and gave fresh ammunition to those who found it impossible to believe that the practice had not preceded Coulson's reign, and had not been known higher up the food chain. "It seemed to me far more likely that Coulson inherited a regime that already existed," said Osborne. "He found himself in charge of what was basically a criminal organization."

With that inescapable sense that something broader had happened, and as the political ramifications became clear, coverage grew. The *Financial Times* and *The Independent* (where I have worked since early 2008) have joined *The Guardian* in vigorously pursuing the story, and the BBC and Channel 4 have aired investigations with new evidence suggesting the rogue reporter claim was bogus.

As that line of defense has become ever more laughable, there has been a visible change in strategy at News International, which seems to have decided to go as far as it can in cleaning house. This January, Rupert Murdoch abandoned a trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos to head to London instead. During his visit the company gave Scotland Yard e-mails implicating news editor Ian Edmondson, albeit only discovered five years after the acts in question. The police deemed it "significant new information," and reopened their

investigation. A week earlier, after the Crown Prosecution Service announced that they would be reviewing all of the evidence in their possession on the case, Coulson had finally resigned as Prime Minister David Cameron's communications director, a position he'd assumed after Conservatives won the May 2010 elections.

Even the Murdoch-owned *Times* felt compelled to put Coulson's resignation on the front page. But a better indication of Fleet Street's continuing unease might be that the ardently left-wing *Daily Mirror*, despite it being a blow to a government they ordinarily gleefully bait, only found space for the longed-for departure low on page 15.

Even in this period when the story has been at its most obviously compelling and unavoidable, the broad approach has not exactly been one of ferocious investigation; an archival search of major papers' daily and Sunday editions from a seven-month-plus span following *The New York Times*'s investigation shows that *The Guardian* published 299 articles on the scandal, and *The Independent* 194. After that, things fall off quickly: *The Times* ran 85 articles; *The Daily Telegraph* 73; the *Daily Express* 65; the *Daily Mail* 61. The *Daily Mirror* published 16. And *The Sun* and the *News of the World* published just nine between them.

Indeed, whatever the outliers at *The Guardian* and *The Independent* do, their work can do little to alter the tenor of the overall coverage. Those two newspapers, the smallest of the nationals, account for just 445,000 sales in a market of 8.93 million—less than 5 percent.

There are those who insist that the widespread decision not to cover the story is driven by straightforward news judgment—and that ulterior motives drive devoted attention. "With this whole story I just hear the shrill shriek of

If the tidal wave hasn't quite swept into Brooks's office yet, the surge is at the very least seeping under the door.

axes being ground," said Roger Alton, executive editor at *The Times*. As editor of *The Independent* in 2009—after ten years at *The Observer*, which he left acrimoniously—he felt the story was old news. "Everyone has an agenda. *The New York Times* certainly has an agenda, after Murdoch's very forceful attempt to rival them with *The Wall Street Journal*." There was no way to condone what had happened, Alton added, but that doesn't mean the story merits coverage today. "For me this is stuff that happened a long time ago. People have gone to prison. Coulson's resigned twice. It's not as if any perceived wrongdoing hasn't been sufficiently addressed. For

me it's roughly on a par with parking in a residents' parking bay in terms of interest."

According to sources inside News International, the *New York Times* report and ensuing developments have caused a new approach at the company's properties. "It became something that NI papers did report, but very, very straight," says one well-placed employee. "The papers would never focus on whether Wade and Coulson had anything to do with it, or committed perjury. It's the drones at the coalface."

"There is a real drive to try and widen it," the same person adds. "Not just because it suits the corporate agenda—it's also because every single other tabloid's been doing it. There's a desire to spread the shit as widely around Fleet Street as it's possible to do."

But the balancing act is a fine one. While trying to widen the circle of blame, News International has had to acknowledge that there are certain kinds of denial that simply won't convince anyone anymore—and, more importantly, wouldn't stand up in court.

The Water Rises

In early April, police made their first arrests in the case in five years: Ian Edmondson, the former news editor, and chief reporter Neville Thurlbeck, who's been on a knife's edge ever since an e-mail containing records of hacked messages with the subject line "transcripts for Neville" emerged in 2009. Days after the arrests, with a series of lawsuits looming, the company finally took a step it had been agonizing over for months, and issued a lawyerly statement admitting some failings. The company said it would approach "some civil litigants with an unreserved apology and an admission of liability in cases meeting specific criteria," conceded collective "genuine regret," and promised compensation to some victims.

It was a stunning reversal, even if it was just as notable for the concessions it did not make. It blamed no specific individuals for the management failings that led to the hacking. And, crucially, it limited the sphere of the admission to 2004–2006, while Coulson was editing the newspaper.

The reasons for these limitations are plain. In the run-up to that qualified acknowledgement of guilt, one person with knowledge of the discussions inside News International explained, there was one crucial impediment to its release. "The key problem is that it's got to come from Rebekah," the person said, speaking before the statement appeared. "Anything she does that admits guilt on behalf of the company, it brings the tidal wave closer to her door."

Nine years after her ebullient Press Awards boycott, Brooks is said to be in a less confident mood. With her attention absorbed by a crisis that won't go away, senior News International employees say Brooks's decision-making has become increasingly erratic. Despite the newly offered settlements, some litigants have insisted they intend to hold her personally accountable in court. "Rebekah is scared," says the person with knowledge of News International's discussions.

Just days before the statement, and in the strangest of circumstances, a named former editor, Paul McMullan, tied

Brooks to the practice personally—by confiding in the actor Hugh Grant that Brooks would have had to know about the hacking, little realizing that Grant was wearing a concealed recording device and would provide a transcript to the *New Statesman*. Police are said to be questioning her; if that tidal wave hasn't quite swept into Brooks's office yet, the surge is at the very least seeping under the door.

But as the water rises, attention remains uneven. The day after the statement's Friday afternoon release, the *Independent* and *Guardian* covered the story in depth, with 6,722 words between them; the remaining six newspapers managed a cumulative total of 4,187. Even now, such continued lack of coverage could staunch chances for reform or broader consequences. "We've heard talk before of last chance saloons, of warnings that this is your ninth life," said Simon Jenkins. "What tends to happen is that the press rides out a bout of hostility, things calm down a bit, the Press Complaints Commission issues a few anodyne remarks. And when all that's happened, we all just sail gaily along."

Indeed, the flagrant attitude that characterized so much of what went on at the *News of the World* has disappeared, but reporters across Fleet Street say that such practices are not wholly extinguished; now, where they do continue, they are mostly carried out by trusted freelancers who are not questioned closely about their stories' sourcing, or just what their claimed expenses purchased.

There are worries for News Corporation besides the ongoing criminal investigation into the *News of the World*. If a large number of the thousands said to have been hacked sue, and considering that just one settlement cost the company £700,000, Rupert Murdoch's empire could be facing enormous liabilities and legal fees far beyond the reported £20 million it has set aside for settlements. If clear evidence emerges of extensive phone hacking at other publications through the reporting of those who do retain an interest in uncovering it, the cost to the credibility of the British press, already battered by its silence, could be just as severe.

Still, the dread must surely be greatest at News International. "The question of who knew and who didn't remains entirely alive," said Osborne. "And the consequences for people high up at NI are potentially devastating. What we could be seeing is the destruction of some of the most stellar careers on Fleet Street."

Just hours after the arrests of Edmondson and Thurlbeck, the *News of the World* took its place at the annual Press Awards once more, carefully placed across the room from *The Guardian*. In spite of the crisis, which went entirely unmentioned, it won four big awards—including reporter of the year, for that man Mahzer Mahmood, and scoop of the year, for a story of his on cricket-match fixing.

As in 2002, Brooks was somewhere else—but for very different reasons. As Mahmood's editor picked up the trophies on his behalf, he told the assembled journalists: "This is the greatest newspaper in the world." *News of the World* staffers applauded furiously. In the rest of the room, though, there was something very close to silence. **CJR**

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True Enough

The second age of PR

BY JOHN SULLIVAN

The Gulf oil spill was 2010's biggest story, so when David Barstow walked into a Houston hotel for last December's hearings on the disaster, he wasn't surprised to see that the conference room was packed. Calling the hearing to order, Coast Guard Captain Hung Nguyen cautioned the throng, "We will continue to allow full media coverage as long as it does not interfere with the rights of the parties to a fair hearing and does not unduly distract from the solemn-

nity, decorum, and dignity of the proceedings." It's a stock warning that every judge gives before an important trial, intended to protect witnesses from a hounding press. But Nguyen might have been worrying too much. Because as Barstow realized as he glanced across the crowd, most of the people busily scribbling notes in the room were not there to ask questions. They were there to answer them.

"You would go into these hearings and there would be more PR people representing these big players than there were reporters, sometimes by a factor of two or three," Barstow said. "There were platoons of PR people."

An investigative reporter for *The New York Times*, Barstow has written several big stories about the shoving match between the media and public relations in what eventually becomes the national dialogue. As the crowd at the hearing clearly showed, the game has been changing.

"The muscles of journalism are weakening and the

muscles of public relations are bulking up—as if they were on steroids," he says.

In their recent book, *The Death and Life of American Journalism*, Robert McChesney and John Nichols tracked the number of people working in journalism since 1980 and compared it to the numbers for public relations. Using data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, they found that the number of journalists has fallen drastically while public relations people have multiplied at an even faster rate. In 1980, there were about .45 PR workers per one hundred thousand population compared with .36 journalists. In 2008, there were .90 PR people per one hundred thousand compared to .25 journalists. That's a ratio of more than three-to-one, better equipped, better financed.

How much better?

The researcher who worked with McChesney and Nichols, R. Jamil Jonna, used census data to track revenues at public relations agencies between 1997 and 2007. He found that revenues went from \$3.5 billion to \$8.75 billion. Over the same period, paid employees at the agencies went from 38,735 to 50,499, a healthy 30 percent growth in jobs. And those figures include only independent public relations agencies—they don't include PR people who work for big companies, lobbying outfits, advertising agencies, non-profits, or government.

Traditional journalism, of course, has been headed in the opposite direction. The Newspaper Association of America reported that newspaper advertising revenue dropped from an all-time high of \$49 billion in 2000 to \$22 billion in

2009. That's right—more than half. A lot of that loss is due to the recession. But even the most upbeat news executive has to admit that many of those dollars are not coming back soon. Six major newspaper companies have sought bankruptcy protection in recent years.

Less money means fewer reporters and editors. The American Society of News Editors found the number of newspaper reporters and editors hit a high of 56,900 in 1990. By 2011, the numbers had dropped to 41,600. Much of that loss has occurred since 2007. Network news did not fare any better—the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism estimates that employment there is less than half of what it was in the peak period of the 1980s.

"I don't know anyone who can look at that calculus and see a very good outcome," said McChesney, a communications professor at the University of Illinois.

The dangers are clear. As PR becomes ascendant, private



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and government interests become more able to generate, filter, distort, and dominate the public debate, and to do so without the public knowing it. "What we are seeing now is the demise of journalism at the same time we have an increasing level of public relations and propaganda," McChesney said. "We are entering a zone that has never been seen before in this country."

The problem is that there is a large gray zone between the truth and a lie.

The First Modern PR Man

Modern public relations was born from a train wreck.

Michael Schudson, a journalism professor at Columbia University, *CJR* contributor, and author of *Discovering the News*, said modern public relations started when Ivy Lee, a minister's son and a former reporter at the *New York World*, tipped reporters to an accident on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Before then, railroads had done everything they could to cover up accidents. But Lee figured that crashes, which tend to leave visible wreckage, were hard to hide. So it was better to get out in front of the inevitable story.

The press release was born. Schudson said the rise of the "publicity agent" created deep concern among the nation's leaders, who distrusted a middleman inserting itself and shaping messages between government and the public. Congress was so concerned that it attached amendments to bills in 1908 and 1913 that said no money could be appropriated for preparing newspaper articles or hiring publicity agents.

But World War I pushed those concerns to the side. The government needed to rally the public behind a deeply unpopular war. Suddenly, publicity agents did not seem so bad. Woodrow Wilson picked a former newspaperman, George Creel, to head his new Committee on Public Information in 1917. The group cranked out thousands of press releases in support of the war and started a speakers bureau that eventually grew to 75,000 people, all giving morale-boosting talks across the country.

"After the war, PR becomes a very big deal," Schudson said. "It was partly stimulated by the war and the idea of journalists and others being employed by the government as propagandists."

Many who worked for the massive wartime propaganda apparatus found an easy transition into civilian life. Samuel Insull, president of Chicago Edison and an early radio

magnate, launched a campaign on behalf of electric utilities, which, according to Schudson, was the most far-reaching public relations effort of the era. It prompted an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission and a new raft of angry reports about the increasing power of PR.

People "became more conscious that they were not getting direct access, that it was being screened for them by somebody else," Schudson said.

But there was no turning back. PR had become a fixture of public life. Concern about the invisible filter of public relations became a steady drumbeat in the press. From the classic 1971 CBS documentary, *The Selling of the Pentagon*, warning that the military was using public relations tricks to sell a bigger defense budget, to reports that PR wizards had ginned up testimony about horrors in Kuwait before the first Gulf War, the theme was that spin doctors were pulling the strings.

Gary McCormick, former chairman of the Public Relations Society of America, said that was unfair. McCormick acknowledged that there have been PR abuses, but he said most public relations people try to steer clear of falsehood. And he makes a pretty logical argument: lying does not work, because you are almost always going to get caught. And when you do, it makes it worse for your client.

"If I burn you, I am out of business," said McCormick, whose organization has a membership of twenty-one thousand. He concedes that can be a tough message to relay to a client facing bad press. "The problem is when you get caught up with a client, and the business drives you to tell a message differently than you would advise," McCormick said.

McCormick is right: lies are not ubiquitous, and they are not the heart of the matter. The problem is that there is a large gray zone between the truth and a lie.

Eric Alterman, a professor at Brooklyn College and a columnist at *The Nation*, said skillful PR people can exploit this zone to great effect. "They are able to provide data that for journalistic purposes is entirely credible," he said. "The information is true enough. It is slanted. It is propagandistic. But it is not false."

PR Up—Journalism Down

So what has changed? Isn't this article yet another in a long line of complaints, starting with Silas Bent's counting of stories generated by publicity agents in one day's issue of *The New York Times* in 1926 (174) or Peter Odegard's 1930 lament that "reporters today are little more than intellectual mendicants who go from one publicity agent or press bureau to another seeking 'handouts'?" It is, in a way. But the context has changed. Journalism, the counterweight to corporate and government PR, is shrinking.

"We are coming out of a period when news organizations were extraordinarily prosperous and able to insulate themselves from a lot of pressures," said Paul Starr, a sociology professor at Princeton University and author of *The Creation of the Media*. "The balance of power has shifted."

When public relations began its ascent in the early twentieth century, journalism was rising alongside it. The period saw the ferocious work of the muckrakers, the development

of the great newspaper chains, and the dawn of radio and, later, television. Journalism of the day was not perfect; sometimes it was not even good. But it was an era of expansion that eventually led to the powerful press of the mid to late century.

Now, during a second rise of public relations, we are in an era of massive contraction in traditional journalism. Bureaus have closed, thousands of reporters have been laid off, once-great newspapers like the *Rocky Mountain News* have died.

The Pew Center took a look at the impact of these changes last year in a study of the Baltimore news market. The report, "How News Happens," found that while new online outlets had increased the demand for news, the number of original stories spread out among those outlets had declined. In one example, Pew found that area newspapers wrote one-third the number of stories about state budget cuts as they did the last time the state made similar cuts in 1991. In 2009, Pew said, *The Baltimore Sun* produced 32 percent fewer stories than it did in 1999.

Moreover, even original reporting often bore the fingerprints of government and private public relations. Mark Jurkowitz, associate director the Pew Center, said the Baltimore report concentrated on six major story lines: state budget cuts, shootings of police officers, the University of Maryland's efforts to develop a vaccine, the auction of the Senator Theater, the installation of listening devices on public busses, and developments in juvenile justice. It found that 63 percent of the news about those subjects was generated by the government, 23 percent came from interest groups or public relations, and 14 percent started with reporters.

An example: when the University of Maryland announced on July 22, 2009 that it would test the new swine flu vaccine, the university press release read this way: "The research is a first step toward the US government's stated goal of developing a safe and effective vaccine."

The Daily Record newspaper in Maryland, Pew said, was first out with the story: "Research on the vaccine is the first step toward the US government's aggressive goal of developing a vaccine for the virus."

Tom Linthicum, executive editor of *The Daily Record*, said that first story reflected the reality of the Internet age. "It's kind of like working for the wire services in the old days," he said. "You write the short lede to get it up there first. You come back the next day and flesh it out."

Linthicum said the vaccine story, while important, was not really in *The Daily Record's* typical coverage area—the paper is more business-oriented. "We came back and fleshed it out some; frankly, we did not flesh it out a lot," he said. "I think we did with it about what we could given our other priorities."

This is not terrible. It is a decision that editors make every day. But, as Pew points out, it does hand a lot of control over the narrative to the institution that is peddling the story.

Of the nineteen stories Pew reviewed that covered the development of the vaccine, three contained significant new information, another three had new details, and the rest either repeated the same basic facts as the press release or were identical stories appearing on a different platform. "One of the key findings of the study was that as the press scales back, dissemination of other people's work becomes

a more important part of the news system," Jurkowitz said. "There is also a greater emphasis on time, on speed, on getting the first bit of information up quickly. Often that first bit of information is coming from government agencies or public relations."

Of course, in the modern world, news does not stay in one place for long. Stories may begin on a newspaper blog or a TV website, but they soon ripple across the Internet like a splash in a pond. Tom Rosenstiel, Pew's director, said that ripple effect makes the original story that hits the web—and the source of information it is based on—even more important.

"The nature of digital technology is that it is distributive," he said. "A story would be grabbed and distributed and when the original story is later updated, other versions out there might not be. It all depends on when someone grabs it."

Some experts have argued that in the digital age, new forms of reporting will eventually fill the void left by traditional newsrooms. But few would argue that such a point has arrived, or is close to arriving. "There is the overwhelming sense that the void that is created by the collapse of traditional journalism is not being filled by new media, but by public relations," said John Nichols, a *Nation* correspondent and McChesney's co-author. Nichols said reporters usually make some calls and check facts. But the ability of government or private public relations to generate stories grows as reporters have less time to seek out stories on their own. That gives outside groups more power to set the agenda.

PR Goes Direct

Leonard Downie Jr., who was executive editor of *The Washington Post* for seventeen years, does not believe that reporters working for reputable organizations are going to let PR people dictate their stories, no matter how busy they get.

"Observing our own newsroom" at the *Post*, "I don't see a difference in the way people are working," said Downie, who is now a professor at Arizona State University and vice president at large of the *Post*. "In addition to talking to PR people, both in government and in business, our reporters want to talk to principals all the time. I don't see a change in that relationship."

What Downie does see is a change in the relationship between PR and the public itself. The Internet makes it easy for public relations people to reach out directly to the audience and bypass the press, via websites and blogs, social media and videos on YouTube, and targeted e-mail.

"Let's take a hypothetical situation in which there had been no reduction in the media; at the same time, there still would be growth in the ability of public relations people to directly reach the public," Downie said. "They are filling a space that has been created digitally."

Some quick examples: in the academic world, the website Futurity regularly offers polished stories from research universities across the country like "Gems Clear Drug Resistance Hurdle" (Northwestern University) and "Algae Spew Mucus to Alter Sea Ice" (University of Washington); on the business front, Toyota used satellite press conferences and video feeds on its website to respond to allegations about sudden accel-

eration in its cars last year, and published transcripts on its website of a long interview with reporters at the *Los Angeles Times*; and in the realm of political advocacy, Media Matters for America led a battle across the Internet for the past several months with the anti-abortion group Live Action over a videotaped sting that Live Action did on Planned Parenthood.

In a vacuum, none of this is bad. Schools need to publicize their research, corporations defend their products, and political groups stake their positions. But without the filter provided by journalists, it is hard to divide facts from slant.

It's also getting tougher to know when a storyline originates with a self-interested party producing its own story. In 2005 and 2006, *The New York Times* and the advocacy group PR Watch did separate reports detailing how television news was airing video news releases prepared by corporate or government PR offices, working them into stories as part of their newscasts. PR Watch listed seventy-seven stations which aired the reports, some of them broadcast nearly verbatim.

Stacey Woelfel, the past-chairman of the Radio Television Digital News Association, said when his group looked into the issue after it was raised by the reports, it was troubled by how widespread the use of the releases had become. "Some stations were running video news releases all the time, sometimes packages from corporate interests," he said.

There is evidence that it has not stopped. James Rainey, the *Los Angeles Times* media columnist, recently won Penn State's Bart Richards Award for Media Criticism for columns last year that showed how local television stations were running paid content in their news programs. "There's a good chance that your small screen expert has taken cash to sell, sell, sell," Rainey wrote in a September 15 column.

In 2008, *The New York Times* again returned to the issue of hidden public relations agendas with a series of stories in which Barstow showed how the Pentagon was using retired military officers to deliver the military's message on the war in Iraq and its counterterrorism efforts. Barstow described how the officers were presented on the news programs as independent consultants offering unvarnished opinions.

After being stonewalled by the Pentagon for two years, the *Times* eventually sued to obtain records about the Defense Department's use of retired military officers. Barstow found evidence that the officers' appearances on television were not happenstance, but a carefully coordinated effort of what the Pentagon called "message force multipliers."

Barstow was struck by the sophistication of the operation. "In a world saturated with spin, viewers tend to tune out official spokespeople and journalists," he said. "Where they are influenced is when they see people who are perceived to be experts in the subject matter but independent of the government and the media."

Front Groups Obscure Special Interests

Hiding the PR agenda is not a new tactic, but one that seems to be rising to new levels. One form it takes is front groups, supporting this cause or that, this candidate or that, this product or that, without revealing their ties to the cause, candidate, or product.

Jane Mayer focused national attention on such groups in an encyclopedic article about the Koch brothers last summer in *The New Yorker*. The article described how the Kochs had funded groups to promote their conservative political philosophy and oppose "so many Obama Administration policies—from health-care reform to the economic-stimulus program—that, in political circles, their ideological network is known as the Kochtopus."

Mayer said one of the most difficult tasks in reporting the story was finding the connections between the groups and their funders. Many people and organizations besides the Kochs fund advocacy groups, and from both ends of the political spectrum. Mayer said it takes so much effort to find out what group is connected with what organization that it is difficult for reporters to keep up.

"You never know what you don't know—it is getting harder and harder to find out who is behind those front groups," she said. That is no accident, according to Wendell Potter, a former vice president for corporate communications at CIGNA, the insurance company.

Potter, who has since become a vocal critic of corporate public relations, particularly related to the health-care debate, said PR's influence has become deliberately more opaque as viewers become more attuned to its influence. During the debate over the Clinton health-care plan in 1993 and 1994, Potter said, the health-insurance industry's trade group openly opposed the measure. In a series of ads featuring Harry and Louise, the fictional married couple, the industry warned that the Clinton plan would mire health care in tangled bureaucracy. The industry's role in the ad, he said, "was very visible, very vocal."

The industry's opposition to the bill reflected the public's concern at the time about government interference in health care, Potter said. But by 2007, public opinion had changed and polls showed that a majority of Americans felt that some degree of government involvement was needed.

Thus, Potter said, the industry no longer wanted to be closely linked to lobbying on the issue. So instead of directly running ads, it farmed a lot of the work out, obscuring its role.

"You really want someone that seems to be an ordinary person. That gives you credibility and the perception that the public is on your side," he said.

The health-insurance industry's trade group, America's Health Insurance Plans or AHIP, declined to speak for this story. But executives with the public relations firm APCO Worldwide, which has worked for the health-care industry, said that when their agency sets up a group to fight for an issue, they don't try to hide their association. B. Jay Cooper, APCO's managing director, said in the recent health-care fight APCO managed such a group, but every reporter who covered the issue knew who APCO represented. That doesn't mean the link was always reported to the public.

Indeed, it is often difficult for reporters to find the connection. It took Drew Armstrong, a health-care reporter for Bloomberg, months to nail stories showing how the health-insurance industry had funded efforts by the US Chamber of Commerce to fight against changing the health system.

Armstrong dug into tax records to show what had previ-

ously been hidden—that AHIP contributed a whopping \$86.2 million to the Chamber to fight against the Obama health-care plan. “I was shocked by the amount,” Armstrong said. “It was 40 percent of the Chamber’s budget.”

The problem for Armstrong was that neither organization’s filings proved a link. There was no definite proof that it was the same money. The IRS forms filed by the groups are pretty scanty—they require organizations to list donations but not the donor—and Armstrong had to work with sources to confirm the connection.

‘I was shocked by the amount.... It was 40 percent of the Chamber’s budget.’

It took a while for Armstrong to establish the link, but he did so in a November 17, 2010, story. Neither group would confirm that it was the same money—the Chamber still won’t—but no one called for a correction.

“Giving money to the Chamber lets you have it both ways,” Armstrong said. “You can sit with the Democrats, lobby for your position, and have your phone calls returned. At the same time, you have someone like the Chamber out there, running ads, doing the public relations campaign.”

After his first story, Armstrong looked into how the Chamber used the money. He found that it set up a sophisticated operation to oppose the law, particularly in swing states. The Chamber paid for ads that ran in twenty-one states beginning in August of 2009. The ads warned that the government-proposed plan would lead to tax increases, swell the deficit, and expand “government control over your health.”

Bill Vickery, who Bloomberg said was paid by the Chamber to help run the opposition in Arkansas, told Armstrong that he organized about fifty events targeting incumbent Senator Blanche Lincoln, a Democrat who was a key supporter of the health-care law. Lincoln lost by 21 percent in last November’s midterm elections.

“I talked to a lot of consultants, pollsters,” Armstrong said. “They said this was one of the most sophisticated operations, akin to a presidential campaign, that they had ever worked on.”

Steve Patterson, the Lincoln campaign manager, said most of the ad money for the health-care fight actually hit the state the year before the midterm election while the battle over the Democratic plan was in full cry. “Most of it was educational in nature,” he said. “Call Senator Lincoln and tell her to vote no.”

But Patterson knew early on that the health-care fight was likely to be the defining issue of the Senate race, and

many of the ads were already targeting Lincoln’s position in favor of change to the health-care system. So he asked the campaign’s ad buyer to track the spending. They found \$6 million in issue advertising was spent during the period—a very large amount in a small media market state.

From October to early December, Lincoln’s buyer found that the US Chamber of Commerce spent \$2 million in advertising. Americans for Stable Healthcare—a coalition of liberal groups, the pharmaceutical industry, and unions in favor of the plan—spent \$1.2 million. And the 60 Plus Association, a conservative senior citizen group opposed to the plan, spent \$650,000.

“I think it was the critical issue that turned voters against Senator Lincoln,” he said. “Her numbers started turning when this process began.”

Tom Collamore, who ran Fred Thompson’s presidential campaign before becoming senior vice president of communications and strategy at the US Chamber of Commerce, likened a modern issue campaign to a presidential race. “There are all the elements,” he said. “You test the message and then you push the message out through all the outlets.”

“If you are really serious about something you have to make a big investment,” Collamore continued. “It involves research and focus groups and proper messaging that will lead to highlighting things that resonate.”

In the health-care battle, the Chamber created a web hub, healthreformimpacts.com, to continue the fight. It set up coalition groups like Employers for a Healthy Economy. Collamore said much of the effort also involved old-fashioned PR work as well. “We did a lot of online pushing of the message through stories, columns,” he said. “A lot of interaction with the press, a lot of interviews.”

Although the fight over health care was larger than most campaigns, Collamore said it was not fundamentally different than several other public relations efforts the Chamber is working on.

One of the largest is the Chamber’s \$100 million “Campaign for Free Enterprise,” an effort to fight government involvement in business matters. Besides the traditional effort of advertising, press releases, and position papers, the Chamber has set up groups like Students in Free Enterprise and the Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour to target college campuses.

It’s also making an online push. The Chamber kicked off part of the campaign with \$100,000 in prize money for a video contest on its Facebook page. The campaign received one hundred thousand views, recorded ten thousand votes, and collected four thousand e-mail addresses to add to the Chamber’s database. Right now, it has 146,000 fans—not Lady Gaga level (more than thirty million at press time) but not bad for a business group.

“The news cycle never ends. There is a lot of space, there is a lot of competition for people’s attention,” Collamore said. “It’s not just press releases anymore.” **CJR**

JOHN SULLIVAN, a former reporter for The New York Times and The Providence Journal, is a freelance journalist. This story is being jointly published with ProPublica.

The Not-So-Great Migration

From the black press to the mainstream—and back again

BY PAMELA NEWKIRK

It started as a trickle. Sylvester Monroe resigned in 2006 as Sunday national editor at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and, two months later, joined the staff of *Ebony* magazine. In 2008 the renowned byline of Jack E. White, the first black columnist at *Time* magazine, began to regularly appear on *The Root*, where Lynette Clemetson, formerly of *The New York Times* and *Newsweek*, was managing editor. By March of this year when

Constance C. R. White, once an influential *New York Times* fashion writer, was named editor in chief of *Essence*, the trickle had swelled into a river of prominent African-American journalists streaming to black-oriented media.

The names of veterans like Lynette Holloway and E. R. Shipp, formerly of *The New York Times*; Teresa Wiltz, Natalie Hopkinson, and Michael Cottman, all of *The Washington Post*; Joel Dreyfuss, formerly of *Fortune* and *PC Magazine*, and Amy DuBois Barnett of *Harper's Bazaar* and *Teen People*, are turning up in places like *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *Essence*; at BlackAmericaWeb.com, a division of Reach Media, Inc.; and at *The Root*, the online site spearheaded by Harvard's Henry Louis Gates Jr. and published by The Washington Post Company.

Some of these moves were prompted by layoffs and buy-outs; others by disillusionment with mainstream journalism or a desire to delve more deeply into African-American issues. Whatever the reasons, with increasing frequency, African-

American journalists are reversing the once common trajectory from the black press to the mainstream. New ventures like HuffPost Global Black, a vertical for Arianna Huffington's widely read website that will be launched in partnership with Sheila Johnson, cofounder of Black Entertainment Television, are likely to quicken the pace.

On the one hand, this reverse migration has brought new luster and talent to black-oriented media. On the other, it is further draining mainstream media of diverse perspectives, raising the specter of a retreat to the days of all-but-segregated newsrooms.

MAINSTREAM NEWSROOMS WERE nearly all white back in 1968, when the National Commission on Civil Disorders famously warned that America was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white, separate and unequal." The news media, it continued, reflected the biases, paternalism, and indifference of white Americans and treated blacks "as if they don't read the newspaper, marry, die, and attend PTA meetings." At the time, African Americans held less than one percent of newsroom jobs.

In the 1960s, as the civil rights movement became a major national story, and as dozens of American inner cities became the sites of urban riots, African-American journalists employed by the black press finally found a door opening to mainstream media. Some of them said they could name the specific riot that resulted in their hiring.

The black press, then, became a casualty of the integration it had long championed. Unable to compete with the extensive coverage provided by television networks and major newspapers, or the higher salaries they provided, its fortunes dwindled. The *Chicago Defender's* weekly circulation fell from a high of 257,000 in 1945 to 33,000 by 1970. The *Pittsburgh Courier* shrunk in the same period from a high of 202,000 to 20,000.

In the years following what came to be known as the Kerner Commission report, African Americans and, later, other members of minority groups, were hired in record numbers, slowly altering the complexion and ideals of American journalism. Among the new hires was Jack White, who left Swarthmore College in 1965 to pursue a journalism career. In 1966 he became a copy boy at *The Washington Post*. The next year, after covering a riot in Cambridge, Maryland, he was promoted to reporter. In 1972 he joined *Time* as a staff writer, where he would become Nairobi bureau chief, Midwest bureau chief,

deputy chief of correspondents, national correspondent, and, for six years, write his popular "Dividing Line" column. In 1969 Joel Dreyfuss began his career at The Associated Press and went on to the *New York Post*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Fortune*, and *PC Magazine*, where he was the second-in-line editor. In 2009 he became managing editor of *The Root*.

Ten years after the Kerner report, the percentage of minorities in mainstream media had increased fourfold, to 3.9 percent, as diversity became an industry buzzword. By 1988, the total number of minority journalists more than doubled, to 3,900, or 7 percent of the newsroom workforce. But newsrooms had trouble stemming a high turnover of journalists of color. In 1985, "The Quiet Crisis: Minority Journalists and Newsroom Opportunity," a study by the Institute for Journalism Education (later the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education), reported that more than 40 percent of minority group members tracked over a ten-year period expected to leave the industry, largely due to a perceived glass ceiling. A year later, the institute released "Musical Chairs: Minority Hiring in America's Newsrooms," which argued that "it is on the battleground of retention that the struggle for full parity" would be won or lost.

Indeed, a Freedom Forum study in 2000 by Lawrence T. McGill found that while the newspaper industry had hired 550 journalists of color each year since 1994, 400 had annually left the business. More distressing were figures showing that 596 journalists of color came into the industry in the year 2000, but by year's end 698 had left. A year later, McGill was commissioned by the then-named American Society of Newspaper Editors, or ASNE (now the American Society of News Editors), to investigate the poor retention rate. Why was this happening? His meta-analysis of thirteen studies done between 1989 and 2000 cited a lack of professional opportunities and an absence of career advancement as two of the main reasons.

At the peak, in 2006, African-American journalists held 5.5 percent of newsroom jobs. But between 2001 and 2011, the number of African Americans in mainstream newspaper newsrooms plunged 34 percent, according to ASNE's 2010 survey. That compares to a 0.9 percent decrease in the number of Asian journalists and a 20.5 and 8.5 percent decline of Native American and Latino journalists, respectively. As of 2010, African Americans, who nationally comprise 15 percent of the US population, hold 4.68 percent of US newspaper newsroom jobs. (The magazine industry does not track minority group employment.) The numbers, said Kathy Times, president of the National Association of Black Journalists, "are devastating."

In 1978, ASNE pledged that its newsrooms would achieve racial parity by 2000. With just 12.8 percent of newsroom jobs held by all minority group members—who comprise 36 percent of the population—the parity goal has since been pushed back to 2025. "Clearly we have issues," said Milton Coleman, senior editor of *The Washington Post* and the immediate past president of ASNE. "A lot of people are no longer excited about what's happening in the newsroom and left either by choice or by chance. There was the feeling that they were bumping up against glass ceilings, and that the

newsrooms they were in were no longer interested in the news they wanted to do. Then on top of it, we have the turn in the news industry."

Coleman said many African Americans come into journalism driven by a passion to illuminate issues in their communities. And that, he said, explains some of the movement to the black press. "People of a like mind saw they could take



Jack E. White "You had to be ready to fight."

the skills that they had picked up in mainstream media and go back to ethnically oriented media and make them better." For example, he named a half-dozen journalists—including Sylvester Monroe and *Newsday's* Mira Lowe; Eric Easter of *Washington Post/Newsweek Interactive*; Dudley Brooks, of *The Baltimore Sun*; and Brian Monroe, an assistant vice president for news at Knight Ridder, who had all been lured to Johnson Publishing Company. "*Ebony* and *Jet* improved just like that," Coleman said.

He added that ASNE—with funding from the McCormick and Ford foundations, and coordinating support from *The New York Times*, The Associated Press, and UNITY Journalists of Color—is holding two meetings this year to begin formulating a new case for diversity. The first will be held in June in Orlando during the National Association of Hispanic Journalists convention and the second at *The New York Times* in September. Coleman argues that the discussion should be framed in such a way that "the news industry understands that as we go forward, the case for diversity is not a social experiment—it's an industry imperative. As the demography changes, in order to be mainstream you're going to have to be more diverse. And if you're not more diverse, someone will take it away from you."

"Diversity is a part of being accurate in your news coverage," he said. "If it's not, people will not read it. We still need diversity because we still need accuracy."

KATHY TIMES, OF NABJ, SAID SHE WAS TAKEN ABACK DURING a recent visit to the *Houston Chronicle*. She went to the

news meeting and “was very disappointed to see not one black editor in that room of about sixteen editors who decide what readers would see.” When asked about her observation, Jeff Cohen, the *Chronicle’s* editor and executive vice president, said that, depending on the day, there would usually be two to four editors of color at the meeting (three are Hispanic and one is Palestinian). But he acknowledged the problem.

“We’re not where we want to be today,” Cohen said. “Diversity is extremely important to me, the management of the newspaper, the readers, the community. But for various reasons, the last two years we’ve had a slight decline in the number of minorities in the newsroom.” Cohen pointed out that 23 percent of the members of the paper’s newsroom staff are people of color. (That, he acknowledged, includes the staff of the Spanish-language paper.) He said Houston’s metropolitan area, which includes outlying suburbs, is 35 percent Hispanic, 17 percent African-American, and 7 percent Asian. In the city proper, the last US Census showed that African Americans and Hispanics alone comprise 63 percent of the population.

Given the economy and the dearth of available media jobs, the parity goal seems less achievable than ever. Meanwhile, Times notes that black-oriented media often offer her members the opportunity to report on issues—health disparities between blacks and whites, for example—that are close to the hearts of some black journalists, and issues that often are not explored in depth by the mainstream.



Mira Lowe ‘A greater sense of purpose’

African-American outlets frequently don’t have the same level of resources as mainstream outlets, she said, “but the good news is that some of our members are in a position that they can afford to explore those opportunities because they are very passionate about covering the black community. They’re at a point in their careers where they have the luxury.”

Many of these reverse migrants describe a sense of relief

Back to Black

Some journalists who have left mainstream media for African-American outlets

Name	Major Mainstream Affiliations	Current Affiliations	Current Role
Amy Dubois Barnett	<i>Harper's Bazaar, Teen People</i>	<i>Ebony</i>	editor in chief
Dudley M. Brooks	<i>The Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun</i>	<i>Ebony/Jet</i>	photo director
Michael Cottman	<i>The Miami Herald, Newsday, The Washington Post</i>	BlackAmericaWeb.com	senior correspondent
Joel Dreyfuss	<i>The Associated Press, USA Today, The Washington Post, Fortune, PC Magazine</i>	The Root	managing editor
Adrienne Samuels Gibbs	<i>The Boston Globe, St. Petersburg Times, The Miami Herald</i>	<i>Ebony</i>	senior editor
Katti Gray	<i>Newsday</i>	<i>Essence, The Root</i>	contributor
Lynette Holloway	<i>The New York Times</i>	The Root, aolblackvoices.com, <i>Black MBA Magazine</i>	contributor
Natalie Hopkinson	<i>The Washington Post</i>	The Root	contributor
Sheryl Huggins Salomon	<i>Fortune, Dow Jones</i>	The Root	deputy editor
Deron Snyder	<i>Fort Myers News-Press</i>	The Root	contributor
E. R. Shipp	<i>New York Daily News, The New York Times</i>	The Root	contributor
Teresa Wiltz	<i>The Washington Post, Chicago Tribune</i>	The Root	senior culture editor
Constance C. R. White	<i>The New York Times, Women's Wear Daily</i>	<i>Essence</i>	editor in chief
Jack E. White	<i>The Washington Post, Time</i>	The Root	contributor

about working for African-American media after years in the mainstream. "It was like coming home," said Michael Cottman, a senior correspondent at BlackAmericaWeb.com, who in 1978 began his career at the *Atlanta Daily World*, the city's oldest continuously published black newspaper. In between he worked for *The Miami Herald*, *New York Newsday*, and *The Washington Post*.

Cottman said at mainstream organizations he sometimes felt resistance to story ideas or suspicion about his ability to be objective while covering black-oriented subjects. He said at Reach Media, his professionalism is assumed.

Jack White agreed. "You can presume a commonality of interest of editor and audience. There's a comfort zone." At mainstream outlets, he adds, "You had to be ready to fight. My back used to be up a lot. My back hasn't been up."

Mira Lowe, like many of these reverse migrants, described feeling a greater sense of purpose when she moved to an African-American outlet. Lowe joined *Newsday* in 1989, a year after graduating from Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, and held a series of copy-desk positions on the features, business, and news desks, and then became the Long Island Life editor at the paper. But in 2007, she jumped at the chance to work for Johnson Publishing, where she was initially hired as assistant managing editor for *Ebony* and *Jet*. In 2009, she became editor in chief of *Jet*, which has a weekly circulation of more than 750,000, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. "I had the opportunity to have an imprint on a legacy brand," she said. "They needed an injection of new ideas, new energy. I felt I could make a difference and give back to publications that have meant a lot to the community."

Sylvester Monroe, a cum laude graduate of Harvard and an author who, over the course of nearly four decades, has worked as an editor or writer at *Newsweek*, *Time*, the San Jose *Mercury News*, and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, moved to *Ebony* in 2006. "There was a time when I never thought I would consider working for *Ebony*. It was just that that wasn't what I was interested in. But *Time* and *Newsweek* are no longer *Time* and *Newsweek*, and newspapers have shrunk. Journalism as we once knew it is gone."

MONROE SAID HE WAS DISHEARTENED BY HIS EXPERIENCE at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, where he said editors "now shamelessly say they don't cover Atlanta unless there's a compelling reason. They've moved to the suburbs. They make no pretense about covering the city." As other opportunities dwindled, he said, black-oriented media "began to look better and better—and one of the reasons is because they needed help. Not just in terms of bodies, but know-how. I got to use what I know and help improve this magazine I grew up with."

Joel Dreyfuss said the failure of the mainstream to embrace diverse viewpoints is helping to drive the reverse migration. From 1996 to 1997, he was editor in chief of a weekly black news start-up that, despite support from a business executive named Donald Miller and seed money from Dow Jones, never got off the ground. "I always felt

we needed a chance to tell our stories without filters," said Dreyfuss. "A lot of us are now seeing the possibilities of unfiltered content."

But Dreyfuss and others point out that black-oriented media can pose their own set of challenges, including limited resources. Many of the journalists initially recruited from the mainstream by Johnson Publishing beginning in 2006 have since left. Some confided that they were asked to pay their own way on assignments, while others described the shock they felt at having to use outmoded equipment. Lowe said while her salary at Johnson Publishing was competitive with the mainstream, other resources were lacking. (Last August the company appointed Desiree Rogers, the former Obama White House social secretary, to be chief executive and announced a major reorganization.)

Dreyfuss said while editors at *The Root* receive full-time salaries, most of the writers are freelancers, so they do not



Joel Dreyfuss 'Stories without filters'

have the benefits offered in mainstream journalism. And Jack White said that there are fewer opportunities to do original reporting. "I wish that something like *The Root* had had the money to cover the Obama campaign the way I covered the Jesse Jackson campaign," he said. "The big weakness is they can't pay for reporting. We're recycling in a lot of cases. There's something reductive."

He and others stressed that this is among the many reasons why diversity in the mainstream still matters. Otherwise, "We go right back to where we started after the Kerner Commission," White said, referring to the 1968 National Advisory Commission report.

Yet Coleman points out that while resources are more plentiful in mainstream media, they have little value if you can't use them to pursue what you think is important. "What good does it do you to be in a newsroom with a lot of resources if you can't do what you're there to do?" **CJR**

PAMELA NEWKIRK is professor of journalism at New York University and the author of *Within the Veil: Black Journalists, White Media*.

Covering Obama's Secret War

When drones strike, key questions go unasked and unanswered

BY TARA MCKELVEY

In the spring of 2009, *New York Times* reporter David Rohde was being held captive by Taliban gunmen in a house in Waziristan, a mountainous region on the Pakistan side of the border with Afghanistan. Aerial drones soared overhead, filling him and his kidnappers with a sense of dread, until one day, he later wrote, "Our nightmare had come to pass." A drone fired missiles near their house, killing several militants on a road and

terrifying people in the area. The house withstood the attack but, Rohde wrote, "the plastic sheeting covering the window hung in tatters." He learned about the efficiency of the drones on that day and also saw the wrath they incurred: "My captors expressed more hatred for President Obama than for President Bush."

Rohde is one of the only Americans to see the drones up close: not, it turned out, as a reporter, but as a prisoner. His first-hand perspective on the strike is rare, and the novelty of his reporting underscores the difficulties of covering this new kind of war, a remote-controlled campaign officially denied by the US government that is unfolding in a region where Pakistani officials have forbidden reporters to travel independently.

Journalists are struggling under these challenging circumstances. Even those reporting safely from afar have not succeeded in digging down to basic questions about drone

attacks: How are targets chosen? Under what legal authority? How successful are drones in killing enemies and sparing civilians? Are the drones helping win the war against would-be terrorists?

War reporting is one of journalism's highest callings, and for good reason: citizens need to know if battles are successful, and what the costs are in blood and money. But it is difficult to grasp the new war that Americans are fighting in Pakistan. As described by former US officials who participated, it is conducted not by military generals but by CIA officers who are guiding drones from offices in Langley, Virginia, that kill people in a country with which the US is not at war.

"I think this is an issue that we—both as a profession of journalists and the public—have accepted without sufficient debate," said *Washington Post* op-ed columnist David Ignatius, who often writes about the CIA and national security issues. "There is something about assassination from ten thousand feet that is more acceptable than it would be from one foot, by the bayonet."

Indeed, the existence of this large-scale, secretive program that is designed to "neutralize" people has become one of the biggest and least understood stories of the Obama administration. Because it is hard for journalists to bear witness, it is difficult for citizens to get a clear picture of what is being done in their name.

Drone Strikes Ramp Up

President Barack Obama has authorized 193 drone strikes in Pakistan since he took office in 2009, more than four times the number of attacks that President George W. Bush authorized during his two terms, according to the New America Foundation, a Washington-based public-policy institute.

Unmanned aircraft became part of the US arsenal in the 1990s, as reconnaissance drones recorded images of terrain in the Balkans. After the September 2001 terrorist attacks, President Bush signed a directive that authorized arming the drones, called Predators, with Hellfire missiles to try to take out terrorism suspects, according to military officials. He later widened the directive to allow strikes against anyone working inside terrorist camps, not just individual suspects.

Today, according to military officials, the United States is running two drone programs: the military is in charge of drones in Afghanistan, where the country is officially at war; the CIA, meanwhile, runs the drone program in Pakistan,

an ally in the war in Afghanistan. The drone operations in Afghanistan are relatively straightforward and US officials routinely release information about the attacks. In Pakistan, where the CIA is running the show, the situation is different.

Jane Mayer, the *New Yorker* writer who published in October 2009 one of the most penetrating stories on targeted killings by drones, said the Predators were “much more than just a breakthrough in technology—they were also a new frontier legally, politically, and morally.” In an e-mail interview, she described an intricate policy behind the secrecy: “It’s not, technically speaking, something that can be done under cover. But when the CIA is asked directly and on the record about its role, it denies having one.”

International politics play a role in that decision. The US government’s official denial, Mayer continued, “is in large part in deference to the Zardari administration in Pakistan, which prefers to mislead the Pakistani public about its acquiescence to the US drone strikes.” That acquiescence was always conditional and uncomfortable between the two allies, each of whom harbors suspicions of the other. In mid-April, Pakistani officials demanded that the CIA dramatically reduce its presence in Pakistan and that drone strikes cease, according to news reports, but, like so much of the US operations in Pakistan, it is unclear what is actually happening there.

In an interview with this author published by *Newsweek* earlier this year, former CIA acting general counsel John A. Rizzo pulled back the curtain a little and described the protocol set up to authorize a drone strike. One of the approximately ten lawyers in the CIA’s counterterrorism unit would review intelligence information and draft a memo asserting that an individual posed a risk to the security of the United States. After weighing the evidence in the memo, Rizzo, who retired in December 2009, would sign his name, noting that he “concurred.” The strike was then authorized.

Despite Rizzo’s unusual candor in that interview, he and other officials have fought to keep most information about the Pakistan drone war out of the public eye. Journalists have been unable to get answers to legal questions such as on what basis the government decides to kill. This is known as “distinction” in international law; in other words, how are those CIA lawyers discriminating between civilians and non-civilians who pose a grave threat to the United States? Also, how many civilian deaths can be justified? This is the question of “proportionality” in international law.

At this point, so little has been written about the way the CIA chooses its targets and executes its missions that some legal scholars argue it is impossible to know whether the program is legal. “I’ve been concerned that we don’t have the right kind of permission from elected officials,” said Mary Ellen O’Connell, an international law professor at the University of Notre Dame Law School. “Pakistan is not Somalia. They have a government we respect. It can be a weak government, but international law doesn’t allow you to act as if there is no government.”

A spokesman for the White House National Security Council, who spoke only on condition he not be named, rebuffed questions about why the administration refuses to speak with reporters on the record about the program.

“You’re going to have a lot of people on the outside, and they all love to talk,” he said. “We can’t do that.” And, the official added, if outsiders are talking about the drone war, “that means they don’t know very much.”

Ignatius, of the *Post*, explained that Obama administration officials are sometimes willing to discuss drone operations in an attempt to promote the White House’s counterterrorism strategy. In February 2010, for instance, Ignatius was able to write a detailed account of the escalation of drone strikes because officials were eager to demonstrate that Obama was more aggressive in his pursuit of al Qaeda than Bush was.

“These rules about covert activities can be bent when it becomes politically advantageous,” Ignatius said. “When it suits them, you get quite a detailed readout.”

Yet rather than demand more consistent transparency from officials or undertake investigations that delve into the program, journalists often have simply relied on what

Hit or Miss

Obama administration policy is to not acknowledge drone strikes in Pakistan, but when an attack killed a high-level Taliban commander in August 2009, officials were more forthcoming. Consequently, 68 percent more stories were published in surveyed publications during that three-month period than were published in a three-month period in early 2009, when drone strikes killed dozens of civilians.



Source: CJR survey of the following media:

Pakistani: Geo News, Dawn, the Daily Times, The Nation (Islamabad)
European: The Guardian, The Economist, the Financial Times; Der Spiegel
US: The Associated Press, the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal

US and Pakistani officials have told them. When reporters depend too heavily on government sources to report on a war, they end up following the narrative that White House officials have created, and in this way provide a one-sided view that obscures reality. The aerial strikes in Pakistan have been underway for nearly a decade, and yet many questions surrounding their use remain unasked and unanswered.

A Shadowy World

The Pakistani media have covered civilian deaths from drone attacks more consistently than Western reporters. Tallies from leading Pakistani media organizations report that as many as eighteen hundred civilians and mid- and low-level fighters have been killed in attacks since Obama took office, as compared to the twenty “high-value” militants

the US managed to kill in that period, according to New America Foundation researchers. The number of civilians and low-level militants who have been killed are sketchy and have thus far proved impossible for US journalists to verify. News stories often cite anonymous Pakistani officials in their accounting of the dead.

"You're left with this kind of shadowy world, and you pick up every discrete fact that you can—knowing all the while that you're only getting a glimpse of something and not the whole thing," said Yochi Dreazen, a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter and now a senior correspondent for *National Journal*.

Jonathan S. Landay, senior national security and intelligence correspondent for McClatchy Newspapers, said that when reporting in Pakistan, he has been forced to rely on the few Waziristan journalists and local officials who are reachable by cell phone for accounts of strikes. "There's a network of tribal journalists who are very good, but one doesn't know if you're getting an exact count because you can't eyeball it," Landay said. "You can go in as an embed with the Pakistani military, but all that's a dog-and-pony show."

Pakistanis following news of the war get a completely different picture than those in the United States. For the past two years, there has been a drumbeat of death in the Pakistani media, with headlines like these on the website of Geo News, one of the biggest television networks in Pakistan: "U.S. Drone Kills 22 in North Waziristan"; "U.S. Missile Attack Kills 30"; "Death Toll in U.S. Drone Strikes Climbs to 19." The victims are often impoverished teenagers who have gotten caught up in the Taliban, and are now dead, according to former CIA officials who had operated in the region. The picture that emerges through this war coverage—including in Pakistani newspapers like *Dawn* and *The Daily Times*—is one of incremental killing of bandits, drug dealers, and marginal characters by airborne missiles.

When the Western media do attempt to cover drone strikes that miss any high-value targets—and which, consequently, no US official is willing to discuss—their stories are thin. An example is a July 8, 2009, Associated Press report that ran in *The Washington Post*: U.S. DRONE ATTACK KILLS 12 IN NORTHWEST. Like dozens of other stories about the killings in Waziristan, the article tells readers nothing about those who were killed, why they were killed, or whether killing them had an impact on the terrorist groups that were targeted. Western reporters often learn of drone strikes from stories published in Pakistani media and, when they write their own stories, the reporters necessarily rely on local Pakistani stringers for details of the strikes beyond any scant Pakistani government information.

Pakistani citizens, not surprisingly, denounce the US drone attacks. In December, people took to the streets of Islamabad to protest the strikes and to show support for a Waziristan resident, Karim Khan, whose son and brother were killed in a 2009 strike and who has filed a lawsuit against the US, charging a CIA official for their deaths. In March, protests broke out in two more remote Pakistani towns. Student activists burned a US flag and an Obama effigy at one protest, saying the strikes were a violation of international human rights.

Pakistani journalists who have worked in Waziristan describe it as one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a reporter. They have not forgotten what happened to Hayat Ullah Khan, a journalist who freelanced for PBS's *Frontline*. Khan, thirty-two, reported for a Pakistani newspaper on the death of an al Qaeda leader, Abu Hamza Rabia, along with four others in December 2005. They had been killed by Hellfire missiles in a strike orchestrated by Americans, and not, as the Pakistani government had declared, by an accident in their illegal bomb-making lab. Khan took photos, proving it was a drone strike, and the story prompted protests over the infringement of Pakistani territory.

The day after his story appeared, Khan was kidnapped. His body was found months later. "He could have been killed

The deaths of the father and others, along with the property destruction caused by the drone strike, left the family destitute. The teenage son called for revenge.

by Pakistani security forces or the Taliban," said Iqbal Khat-tak, Peshawar bureau chief of the Pakistani newspaper *Daily Times*, and one of the few reporters who has done stories about the drones in Waziristan. "We don't know."

Another reporter who has braved that danger is Pir Zubair Shah. Shah grew up in a roughshod region of South Waziristan, where his father sent him to school and also gave him a rifle, so that he would feel comfortable both among the educated and the tribal members of society. This allowed Shah to float between the world of intelligence agents and the one inhabited by Taliban fighters, and his reporting helped *The New York Times* win a 2009 Pulitzer for a package of stories depicting the deepening US military and political challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Shah's first bylined article, which appeared in *Newsday* in January 2006, was about a drone strike in Bajaur, in North Waziristan. The CIA operatives who launched the strike had been trying to kill a man thought to be al Qaeda's number-two leader, Ayman al Zawahiri, but he escaped. Eighteen people were killed, and Shah took pictures of jagged, metal pieces from the missile that had exploded, as well as the fresh graves.

"It was just a scene of devastation," he recalled in an interview. He spoke with people who lived in the area about the assault, and through his reporting on this and other strikes, American readers were able to get a rare glimpse of how the war was unfolding in Waziristan.

Shah, thirty-three, was taken captive by the Taliban in

2008 and released after the intervention of a local tribal leader. He is no longer pursuing risky stories. Instead, he will join Harvard in the fall as a Nieman fellow.

Selective Secrecy

Three days after Obama was sworn in as president, his administration launched its first drone strike, according to numerous news reports. A missile reportedly hit a house in Koresh Kot, a village in South Waziristan that was believed to be a Taliban hideout.

News accounts of the incident had few, and conflicting, details, underscoring the difficulty of getting basic facts. A January 23 article on Pakistan's Geo News website said the attack was "reported to have killed 10 people," but did not identify them. A January 23 *New York Times* article reported that the missile strike killed seven, including three children, citing Pakistani news reports. The story added, "American officials in Washington said there were no immediate signs that the strikes on Friday had killed any senior Qaeda leaders. They said the attacks had dispelled for the moment any notion that Mr. Obama would rein in the Predator attacks."

A January 24 *Washington Post* story cast the incident in a somewhat celebratory tone, saying it was "the first tangible sign of President Obama's commitment to sustained military pressure on the terrorist groups."

The news articles mentioned only briefly the most disturbing part of the story: the drone struck the wrong target. Rather than being a militant, the homeowner had been a tribal elder who had attempted to organize a peace movement and was just the kind of person that CIA operatives had been hoping to encourage in their efforts to fight extremism. The supposed Taliban hideout was actually an eight-bedroom house that had cost \$21,000 to build, a fortune in a country where the average annual income is roughly \$500. The deaths of the father and others, along with the property destruction, left the family, including an eighteen-year-old son, destitute. The teenager called for revenge.

Those details were not gathered by reporters, but rather by a human-rights investigator, Chris Rogers, who was working with the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict. His report, released months after the attack, shone a spotlight on the fact that civilians were killed in the assault. Rogers explained in an interview in Washington that he got the information by traveling to Peshawar, where he met with members of the homeowner's family. Their accounts were supported by Pakistani government documents.

Journalists know that finding non-official sources is crucial in covering the drone war, especially under the tight-lipped Obama administration. "The only time I'm allowed to talk to senior staff or the NSC is for stories that make the administration look good," McClatchy's Landay said.

According to a survey of selected publications conducted by CJR, there were eighty stories about Pakistan drone strikes in major media outlets that regularly cover international news in the first three months of the Obama administration, when no "high-value" Taliban or al Qaeda figures were killed but at least 115 others died. But in the three-month period

starting that summer, when a drone strike killed a Taliban commander, 136 stories appeared—68 percent more than in the earlier period (see graphic, page 45). Because reporters could only get sketchy information about the early strikes, they received little coverage. But when the commander was targeted and killed, the dire need for secrecy melted away.

At about 1 a.m. on August 5, 2009, a missile struck a villa in South Waziristan, while a Taliban commander named Baitullah Mehsud was resting on a balcony alongside his wife. He suffered from diabetes, and a medical practitioner was administering an intravenous drip to him, "according to two Taliban fighters reached by telephone on Friday," an August 8 *New York Times* article reported.

A Pakistani official quoted in the story, who had seen a video of the assault, described what happened after the missile landed: "His torso remained, while half of the body was blown up." Mehsud was killed, along with his wife, the owner of the house, and others. Three children were also injured.

Many of the articles that appeared in the US press had a celebratory tone and reflected the mood of American officials. Mehsud was, as *Washington Post* reporters wrote in an August 8 article, "something of an obsession for the CIA." US officials were proud of the fact that they had finally taken him out and, over the course of several weeks, spoke candidly with journalists. For example, Mehsud's wife had been "giving her husband a massage" on the balcony before the missile hit, according to a March 21, 2010, *Washington Post* article.

It is revealing to see when officials are forthcoming. One mission of the secretive Joint Special Operations Command became known during the Bush administration—when officials told journalists these soldiers helped track Saddam Hussein down to his hole in the ground in 2003. Obama administration officials broke their tradition of silence to describe the assault on Mehsud.

This is selective secrecy, and it inhibits the kind of reporting that would help Americans answer a very basic question: Is the drone war working?

"Drones are here to stay," explained the *New Yorker's* Mayer. "So being for or against their use isn't really where the interesting controversy is at this point. The argument is over who is a legitimate target, how that is decided, what legal framework covers this sort of warfare, and how many innocent lives can be justified as so-called 'collateral damage' in a drone strike—morally, legally, and politically."

Some of the most resourceful reporters in the news business have pushed hard for more access to information about this remote-controlled battle and a few have made some progress. But too often, journalists have settled for only meager morsels to fashion their stories. A more whole-hearted pushback is in order, with top newsrooms banding together, backed by their legal departments, to try to force a more substantive and open public policy debate on whom and how the US decides to kill with the push of a button. **CJR**

TARA MCKELVEY is the author of *Monsterring: Inside America's Policy of Secret Interrogations and Torture in the Terror War* and is a 2011 Guggenheim Fellow. Research assistance was provided by Jed Bickman of the Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute, which also provided financial support for the preparation of this article.





Ideas + Reviews

SECOND READ

The Paper Chase

For tabloid king Emile Gauvreau, it took a lifetime to slow down

BY MICHAEL SHAPIRO

Years later, when he recounted the events that would lead to his becoming the most sensational, shameless, ambitious, and tortured newspaper editor of his time, Emile Gauvreau would return to the day in 1924 when, without a job but with a letter of reference in his pocket, he stood before the desk of Carr Van Anda, the legendary and terrifying managing editor of *The New York Times*. The letter, written by Gauvreau's old boss, a long ago colleague of Van Anda, brought him only as far as the great man's desk, where Gauvreau watched him read page proofs and drink coffee from a big mug. An assistant read his letter and advised him to return the following day, when he could meet the city editor.

Gauvreau did not linger. He returned to his hotel and in the morning when he looked out the window he noticed on the building across the street the flags that bore the name Macfadden. As fate would have it, he had booked a room facing the headquarters of the publishing empire of Bernarr Macfadden, the health and physical culture enthusiast who had made a fortune selling magazines celebrating the benefits of clean living and true love. Gauvreau had written a few pieces for Macfadden's *True Story*, love stories dispatched on his days off that had each earned him \$150, far more than his \$60 weekly newspaper salary. Perhaps, he thought, he might stop by before heading downtown to the *Times*, and cadge an assignment or two.

No sooner had he arrived at the Macfadden building than he was brought to Fulton Oursler, Macfadden's top editor, who wasted little time before ushering him into the office of the boss himself—who, it quickly became clear, had plans for Gauvreau far grander than freelance gigs.

Gauvreau had come by his joblessness honorably, having recently been ousted after five years as managing editor of the *Hartford Courant*—a position to which he had ascended before he turned thirty. Weeks earlier, he had run a series on a medical school diploma mill that had succeeded both in exposing a factory for unqualified physicians and enraging Connecticut's political boss. He took his beef to Gauvreau's boss, who did Gauvreau the courtesy of allowing him to resign.

Gauvreau would spend his last night at the paper overseeing the coverage of President Woodrow Wilson's death. His youngest child lay gravely ill at home, and only when his wife called to say that he had taken a turn for the worse did Gauvreau leave his desk. The child died shortly before he reached home; moments after the death, a messenger brought an early edition of the paper. Gauvreau did not like the lead story's headline and was tinkering with the wording when his wife appeared on the second floor landing.

"You're worse than a soulless gambler," she wailed. "All you can think of, day and night, is the paper. Even now! A gambler stops when his den closes up. You NEVER stop!"

Bernarr Macfadden wanted to start a new paper, a crusading tabloid to be called *The Truth*. He wanted a million readers. He needed an editor for whom life meant work, and little else. He had found his man.

Journalism has yielded a surfeit of newspaper memoirs, great heaves written with the presumed wisdom of hindsight by this editor or that who, in the long quiet spaces of retirement, sit back to reminisce about the big ones they covered and, in their lighter moments, remember all the laughs along the way. *My Last Million Readers*, Gauvreau's chronicle of his strange and occasionally glorious career, is not on anyone's required reading list, and not merely because the title does not play on the word "Times." The book appeared in 1941, and though it drew attention and favorable reviews, it vanished. Its author died in 1956, years past his last day in a city room, and though the *Times* marked his passing with a sizeable obituary, his name would soon slip from memory.

That is a pity. Gauvreau could write and he has a story to tell. A story that is, at turns, sad, triumphant, thrilling, bitter, and, ultimately, accepting of the life he chose for himself that day in loony Bernarr Macfadden's office.

It is also a cautionary tale, but not merely an admonition against the evils of overwork and the dangers of an unbalanced life. Rather it offers a message that begins with the choice of the title—my last million readers. These readers existed for Emile Gauvreau the way voters existed for Lyndon Johnson. As Johnson once told an aide who could not fathom why in 1964 he was worried about reelection, You don't understand—I want them all.

Emile Gauvreau wanted his million readers. Or, in the parlance of the moment, all those eyeballs. Only after he did everything he could to woo them did he see that he had been playing a loser's game all along.

MY LAST MILLION READERS BEGINS DECEPTIVELY; its early pages suggest a tale

They were trying to lure readers away with the promise of even more fun, and sensation. Gimmicks can seduce for a day or so. But they do not necessarily buy loyalty.

that will do for journalism what Horatio Alger did for free enterprise: the story of a young man of modest means and low self-regard who finds a home in a newsroom, and by dint of his wit, enterprise, and piranha-like pursuit of a story, works his way up the career ladder, landing in the big city at the precise moment when the newspaper business was undergoing a revolution that, in its time, rivaled the one taking place today.

Gauvreau grew up poor, the son of a French-Canadian father whose forebears had fought for the British, thereby making young Gauvreau an outsider by birthright. His condition was exacerbated by a childhood leg injury that nearly crippled him and, by chance, made him a young devotee of Macfadden's muscle-building regimens. His itinerant family finally settled in New Haven, Connecticut, where his bookish, opinionated father found work in a gun factory. Gauvreau was sixteen and training to become a musician—he played the flute—when money at home became so tight that he was forced to leave high school after two years, and, with an introduction from his disappointed music teacher, take a job at New Haven's *Journal-Courier*.

There he discovered in his editor a man who "opened a door through which I was to pass to see the best and worst of what may be absorbed in a lifetime," he wrote; "from darkest Russia to the jungles of Nicaragua; from Presidents to paupers; from high idealism to the lowest depths into which humanity can crawl."

It was 1909 and the newsroom was a mix of aging men learning to type after careers spent writing in longhand and an annual influx of Yale undergrads, among them Sinclair Lewis. Gauvreau focused his considerable energy into extricating himself from the tedium of covering

funerals and sermons, so that he could chase stories of his own, the splashier the better. He graduated from obit editor to police reporter and his editor did not stop him from trying his hand at solving the ones that vexed the local cops, among them the slaying of a local merchant at the hands of a failed playwright who, it turned out—fulfilling the darkest wish of every reporter who grew up on the chilly periphery of the smart set—had been a childhood tormentor. Gauvreau watched him hang. "When I left the prison to write my story," he wrote, "I found out why newspapermen drank and I had my first half tumbler of cognac."

He was making a name for himself. He exposed the local politician who pocketed \$25 for every prostitute he bailed out. "I was no longer interested in printing surface facts," he wrote. His boss, however, rewarded his enterprise with ever more desk work—sports editor, business editor, automobile editor, real estate editor, and, with the outbreak of World War I and the need for someone to plow through 100,000 daily words of dispatches from the fronts, telegraph editor: a pre-historic aggregator.

But the promotions, and better pay, brought him only limited joy: "I had to be a reporter again." The managing editor of the *Hartford Courant*, Clifton Sherman, had been impressed with Gauvreau's sleuthing and told him a reporting job at his paper was his when he wanted it. He headed to Hartford, pausing only long enough to marry the *Journal-Courier*'s young society editor who had left Mount Holyoke College for journalism, and who, much to her eventual regret, would leave journalism for him.

The *Courant* claimed the mantle of the nation's oldest paper—a battle it maintains to this day with, of all places, the *New York Post*. It ran the Declara-

tion of Independence as a news story and counted George Washington as a subscriber. But that history, Gauvreau would soon come to believe, had entombed the *Courant* in the antediluvian notion that it existed to serve the needs of the select few in what, its editor in chief liked to remind his staff, was known as "the land of steady habits."

For a time, Sherman gave Gauvreau the freedom to chase his own stories. He was especially pleased with his discovery of an aging woman who had been a doyenne of Chicago society but who now was living the life of a hermit. The writing reflected the journalistic sensibilities of the era—long, elaborate, baroque, but which Gauvreau also imbued with elegance and heart.

There is an atmosphere of gloom about this old house of the one-time philanthropist. It seems to have withdrawn quietly from the blare of mechanical music and tinsel show of the pleasure resort, seeking protection amid the long, thin trees of the hull. The blinds are shut, the paint has long since faded from the house, and the building to all appearance is vacant. The only noise on the premises is that of the creaking hinges of the blinds.

But Sherman had bigger plans for him, plans that, in hindsight, suggest a boss looking not for a star but for a successor. Gauvreau was working, by his estimation, thirteen-hour days, and despite his youth was taking on the tasks of a manager. Sherman had been running the newsroom for twenty-two years, reporting to a proud and aging owner and editor, Charles Clark, in whom Gauvreau saw the centurion standing in the path of change.

"The age of rugged, personal journalism was dying," he wrote. "The streamlined march of newspaper progress, as it was called, was merciless and we had to keep up with it..."

Clark did not trouble himself with circulation, and seemed at turns oblivious or hostile to the great societal changes taking place around him. Gauvreau and the paper's business editor, meanwhile, products of the Jazz Age, began searching for ways to lure readers—comics, joke columns, syndicated features. Gauvreau launched the re-

gion's first newsroom radio station and set off for a trip across the country, to see what other papers were doing to boost their readership. When Clark spotted a copy of the nation's first tabloid, the *New York Daily News*, on Gauvreau's desk, he snorted, "that sheet is a hopeless venture. Readers will never be satisfied with a paper that throws its news out to print pictures."

BUT THEY WERE SATISFIED. AND NOT because the *Daily News* had thrown out its news, but rather because the paper had succeeded in redefining news to suit its purposes. The paper's founders—Joseph Patterson and his cousin, Robert McCormick, the publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*—had modeled the *Daily News* after Lord Northcliffe's London *Daily Mirror*, one of the world's first tabloids; the name of this species was derived from medicine that now came not in powdered form, but in little tablets. At the *Daily News*, news meant lots of photos. It meant "society news" on page six, five-dollar "stranger than fiction" stories from readers ("no attention will be paid to literary style"), advice columns ("Keep Kids Well"), and all sorts of contests—"Bright Sayings," "My Funniest Motor Experience," neither of which proved a keeper, and "Most Beautiful Girl," which did.

The idea was to make the experience fun. But something far more significant was taking place than merely choosing "Gasoline Alley" as a comic strip. The business side of the *News* had dispatched to Manhattan's Lower East Side a scout—enter into the journalistic hall of fame the name Sinclair Dakin—who returned with news akin to the true discovery of the Lost City of Gold: a vast and untapped market of readers. The neighborhood, she reported, was no longer the downtrodden immigrant district of the past. There were fewer immigrants, but those immigrants who remained had, over the past twenty years, steadily ascended the income ladder. They had money to spend. And they had had children who emulated them in the race to assimilate. They worked. And they read.

They read at home and they read on the subway—where the tabloid was far easier to negotiate than a broadsheet—and when they were done, they left the

paper on their seats for another reader to pick up. Word of mouth: the marketer's dream.

That reader had a name: Sweeney. And at the paper, a guiding maxim evolved: "Tell it to Sweeney." In its early years, the *Daily News* tried all sorts of ways to please Sweeney. It made stories shorter. It gave him newsier photos. It provided him with help wanted ads. And, perhaps most importantly, it gave him a voice—from the "Vox Pop" column to the "Love Story Plot Contest."

By 1924, when Macfadden and Gauvreau launched the tabloid they had renamed the *New York Evening Graphic*, they were not so much competing for readers as they were intruding on a relationship six years in the making. They were, in essence, trying to lure readers away with the promise of even more fun, and sensation. As Gauvreau was to learn, gimmicks can seduce for a day or so. But they do not necessarily buy loyalty.

The lesson was slow in coming.

Perhaps it might have had a chance had it been competing against only one tab; Macfadden, after all, had a loyal core of fitness buffs who presumably found a reassuring voice in the paper's screeds against physicians, high-heeled shoes, and hats; "Air the hair" was a Macfadden credo. But three months before the *Graphic's* maiden edition, William Randolph Hearst, uncouthly late to the game, had launched the *New York Daily Mirror*. The tabloid war was on, and Gauvreau soon began hearing of stacks of the *Graphic* being dumped in the East River.

By his fifth year at the *Graphic*, while not necessarily wincing at what he had done in service of Macfadden's dream, Gauvreau could certainly look back and mark the toll that chasing the *Daily News* had taken on his system. He was only in his mid-thirties, he wrote, but "five years of tabloidism turned my hair iron gray..." Hewing to Macfadden's proven magazine formula of letting real people tell real stories, the *Graphic's* early pages featured such headlines as "I Murdered My Wife Because She Cooked Fishballs For Dinner." Readers' early curiosity, however, gave way to a quick drop in sales, which only spurred Gauvreau on.

He stole like mad. The *Graphic* of-

fered contests, reader confessionals, and the odd scandal, but was still panting in its pursuit of the *News*. The paper might enjoy a bump of 200,000 readers vying for the \$5,000 first prize in its crossword puzzle contest. But the numbers faded with the end of the contest, and the *Graphic* had no choice but to raise the stakes to \$25,000, which Hearst then bested with a prize of \$30,000.

Much as he would have loved a big story—the sort of story that had made his name in Connecticut—Gauvreau now saw that he could no longer rely on events alone to draw readers. “Circulation,” he wrote, “had to be kept up by making news.”

He searched for scandal; he was sure the Miss America contest was rigged, and the ensuing exposé got him sued. In fact, he ran so many stories sure to draw legal attention that, in time, the “damages demanded” in the *Graphic*’s various libel suits totaled \$12 million.

Promotions, and better pay, brought him only limited joy.

So fevered was Gauvreau in pursuit of readers that when an aggrieved subject of a *Graphic* story threatened to sue for \$500,000, Gauvreau advised him that he wouldn’t pay him attention unless he doubled the damages to \$1 million. Macfadden would call with ideas at all hours, often phoning at three o’clock in the morning, once with an idea that lured 30,000 readers: “Some convict was executed at Sing Sing last night,” he told Gauvreau. “Run a full-page picture of his face on the front page and over it use a two-word headline, two inches high: ROASTED ALIVE.”

Nice try. But the *Daily News*, always a step ahead, did them one better with its page-one photo of the hooded Ruth Snyder sitting in the electric chair.

The headline: DEAD.

Gauvreau’s life, on the surface, had changed little. He had moved his wife

and children from Connecticut to New York, but, as before, saw little of them. “I saw no permanency in anything,” he wrote. All that mattered was the race that he was losing.

“We could no longer wait for calamities to happen,” he wrote. “Characters were built up and paraded. Hot news became the wild, blazing delirious symptom of the time.”

One of his tools was, as he put it, “the pictorial creation known as the ‘composograph,’” a precursor of Photoshop. It represented, in literally the most graphic way, the distance Gauvreau had traveled since he made his way from Hartford to New York, in the hope of landing at the *Times*.

The composograph combined images in a way that suggested fact where none existed. The *Graphic* was publishing Rudolph Valentino’s biography, and what better way to draw readers to the tale of the late heartthrob than to capture him entering the spirit world, greeting other departed celebrities. Circulation jumped by 100,000. It did not last. Macfadden began looking for a buyer. So worn out that he was unable to find an escape in his old refuge of literature, Gauvreau cashed in his *Graphic* shares and quit, leaving behind men and women “who knew how much harder it was to hold the attention of hundreds of thousands of lowbrows than to please 30,000 highbrows. One practically starved to death pleasing highbrows.”

Five years after standing at Carr Van Anda’s desk, his life had come to another crossroads. The run at the *Graphic* was at an end. His career as a tabloid editor, however, was not.

WHEN GAUVREAU CAME TO MEET WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST, Hearst took him to his lighthouse, handed him a hatchet, and together they set about unpacking crates of furniture.

Hearst had two New York papers—the *Mirror* and the broadsheet *Journal*. The *Mirror* had a storied editor in Walter Howey, the inspiration for fast-talking Walter Burns in *The Front Page*. No matter. Hearst, an acquisitive man, wanted Gauvreau as an editor. Gauvreau wanted \$25,000 a year, a three-year contract, plus a column. It’s a deal, said Hearst, and advised him not to worry about

Howey, who, Gauvreau soon discovered, had not been informed that he was out and had no intention of leaving. He walked into the newsroom on his first day to see all the editors playing with yo-yos, a *Mirror* giveaway. A “sure fire” circulation builder, Howey told him. It was as if he had never been away.

But in his recounting of life working for Hearst, a different voice narrates *My Last Million Readers*. Gauvreau is still driven, still chasing the big story, still hunting for the million readers he never delivered to Macfadden. But bitterness has begun to seep into the tale. Gauvreau is an angrier man. He is angry with his old colleague and nemesis at the *Graphic*, Walter Winchell, who parlayed his popularity, factually challenged gossip column into a better-paying gig for Hearst. Gauvreau regards him as a preening hack, and a fraud. He is angry with his boss, Arthur Brisbane, Hearst’s top editor, an aging legend whom he comes to regard as a self-aggrandizing tyrant.

Still, what little pleasure life offered him came almost exclusively from work. A wise colleague at the *Graphic* had once taken the bold step of offering Gauvreau his two-cents’ worth of psychological profiling: Perhaps, he suggested, the job was compensation for the pain of his past—“You are pouring out all your passion, tenderness, all you have to give, all your love, vitality and libido into jazz journalism to escape from the realities of life.” Gauvreau did not disagree. Nor did he pause. Instead, he used the insight to create a fictionalized version of himself in a novel, *Hot News*, that he wrote in four-thousand-word bursts at the office once the paper was put to bed. In 1932, the book became a movie, *Scandal for Sale*, that ends with the editor, whose chase of a million readers ends in a stunt that kills his best reporter, walking away from the job, and begging his wife’s forgiveness. In reality, Gauvreau and his wife, strangers by now, separated.

But the newsroom hummed with life, and Gauvreau captures the *Front Page* romanticism and lunacy of a big-city tabloid covering sin, scandal, and, with the coming of the Great Depression, hard times. Hearst orders a hatchet job on Mae West for apparently insulting his consort, Marion Davies. Winchell manages to so offend mobsters that he



Heavenly image Rudolph Valentino stars in a 'composograph.'

hires bodyguards and carries two pistols. Charles Lindbergh's infant son is kidnapped and the *Mirror* calls in every underworld chit it has in the hunt for the missing child. The baby is found murdered. The *Mirror* is left to resume its futile chase of the *Daily News*.

"I had accumulated circulation by pushing into the back of my mind all that I had learned about the value of constructive news," Gauvreau wrote. "I was now definitely part of that strange race of people aptly described... as spending their lives doing work they detest to make money they don't want to buy things they don't need to impress people they dislike."

He accepted an invitation to visit Russia—fleeing the newsroom, if only temporarily. He returned and wrote a book more admiring of what he had seen than was wise for an employee of the virulently anti-Communist Hearst. But before it appeared he would have one final tabloid moment, on the night of February 13, 1935, a Wednesday, when the world's press, sensational and not, was waiting for the verdict in the trial of Richard Bruno Hauptmann, accused in the kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby.

"Sitting at the city desk... I felt for the last time in a newspaper office the hunch of instinct, that strange presentiment, beyond reasoning, which seems to turn a newspaperman's backbone into a divining rod," he wrote. "A fixed belief came over me that the stoical German would go to the chair."

The aging Brisbane, who had been at this game far longer, had ordered up three different versions of the outcome—the chair, acquittal, contingencies of "disagreement of the jury"—and left Gauvreau with his hand on the button, with the understanding that on this night in particular the *Mirror* had better be both first and right.

"Now I know that the minutes ticking off the blood-sweating moments between the return of the jury and the seating of the judge meant a national scoop..." he wrote. "My hand guarded a telephone which connected me with the pressroom." The city room filled with onlookers, placing bets. An office boy raced with the teletype reporting that the jury was in and the judge had been woken from his nap.

"Now was the time to obey my hunch and release the press which would roar out the news that Hauptmann was to die!"

he wrote. "For the first time in my tabloid experience, something stopped me." Good to be first. A disaster to be wrong. So he waited. The circulation manager came tearing into the newsroom screaming that the *American* had broken the news Hauptmann had been acquitted.

But still Gauvreau held fast. Five minutes—an eternity—passed, and he waited to hear from his man at the courthouse, sure of what was to come, and ignoring the hysterics of the circulation manager. When the call finally came—"Guilty as the devil. It's the chair"—Gauvreau had his moment and, for that night at least, a stab at his last million readers.

The Russia book appeared in May, and Hearst, greatly displeased, ordered Brisbane to can Gauvreau. He was forty-four years old and for the first time since he was sixteen had no newsroom where he could live his life. There is no mention in his memoir that this saddened him.

IN THE YEARS TO COME GAUVREAU would bounce from job to job. He worked in government, wrote books, took part in a secret mission to buy land in Cuba as a refuge for Jews escaping Hitler's Germany. He returned to a newspaper, though not a tabloid, one last time, to edit the Sunday magazine at Moe Annenberg's *Philadelphia Inquirer*. He had been out of the business for two years. He liked Annenberg, who was loud, forceful, and in dire trouble with the Internal Revenue Service. Annenberg had been Colonel McCormick's circulation man at the *Chicago Tribune* and, like Macfadden and Hearst, dreamed in the millions of readers. Gauvreau was happy to help, up to a point.

One afternoon, he was summoned to a presentation that George Gallup's pollsters were making to Annenberg about the wisdom of appealing to woman readers by offering aspirational photos of swimsuit models. He watched Annenberg listen as the eager pollsters characterized newspaper work as "traffic in readership." Annenberg, soon to head to prison but still hunting for readers, dismissed their charts and analysis and announced that he would continue running his paper with his gut.

Gauvreau returned to choosing his photographs and when the workday ended, headed home. He had remar-

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ried and he and his wife had settled in a Pennsylvania farmhouse. "I suppose you live in a little cottage where it's quiet, away from everything," Anenberg told him one day. "You get to go home there, every night, and nobody bothers you and you can forget everything—no worries—and you can sleep. And when you wake up, the sun shines. Jesus! You know, you're not such a God-damned fool after all!"

Gauvreau never admits that he was one, though he makes a powerful case. *My Last Million Readers* is filled with anecdotes and fact, recollection and rueful observation, and far too many pages beefing about people Gauvreau did not like. The result is a bit of literary obfuscation, almost but never quite articulating what went wrong, and how he finally succeeded in making it right.

But it is fair to say the beginning of the end of his life in what he called "tabloidia" began with the invitation to go to Russia. He took a leave, sailed to Naples, visited Pompeii, Vienna, Warsaw, and Paris. In Russia he met Stalin's lackeys. But he also got to talk with Maxim Gorky. He toured factories where he met workers with all sorts of innocent questions about America.

The trip catapulted him back into the world. He was talking with people who did not have gossip to peddle, who were not hounding him for this scam or that to tweak circulation. He was not spending another day engaged in what the dyspeptic Westbrook Pegler dismissed as "gents room journalism."

It was as if that day in Bernarr Macfadden's office he had fallen down a rabbit hole and into a realm where all life's decisions were framed by a simple, inexorable calculus: Would this bring readers? Gauvreau recognized that he'd been a sucker for the elusive payoff. And he knew that the longer he chased those readers, the more he removed himself—physically, emotionally, intellectually—from all the things that might have once piqued his curiosity.

Only after Gauvreau had left the *Mirror* did he begin to see a world larger than the newsroom, and all the petty people and stories that populated the tabloid universe. "Back at my desk," he wrote of his return, "I looked at the tabloid turmoil with increased detachment."

It was not as if he didn't care. Quite the opposite—he began to care more. He might as well have quit the day his ship docked. He was done.

My Last Million Readers offers its lessons by way of self-incrimination. Gauvreau may have had his big-city newsroom stories, as so many news people do. But they were no match for the earlier stories, when he was beginning to learn his craft and seeing all that a limping, shy, awkward young man could accomplish armed only with his curiosity and a way with words.

Yes, he had wanted his million readers, and there is no shame in that—only a fool, or an aging editor in Connecticut, would not value circulation. His mistake came by trying to lure those readers with a louder, sillier, more vulgar version of what they had. Gauvreau had made his name as a young reporter chasing his stories. Then he came to New York and became, with rare exceptions, remarkably unoriginal.

He was hardly alone. His epoch was an era of great redundancy, with everyone trying his cut at variations of the same stories—different gangster, different showgirl—as everyone else. And how could they not, when the only world that seemed to matter was the one limited to people very much like themselves, and where the relentless pace of the news meant time measured not in days or hours, but in minutes. Time measured a deadline at a time.

Only when he began his journey to Russia—and set in motion an act of professional suicide; planned or unplanned, he never says—was Gauvreau reminded of how interesting the world could be, especially for someone with a pad and pen. On the day he left newspapers for good in 1940, his new and happy wife picked him up as the *Inquirer's* presses were beginning their deafening run. She was in a hurry to get back to their farm. What's the rush? he asked. He was, finally, in no hurry.

But she was. Their Nubian goat was about to have a calf. A small story. But their story. And she didn't want to miss it. **CJR**

MICHAEL SHAPIRO, a contributing editor to *CJR*, teaches at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

Pay Up

Sources have their agendas. Why can't money be one?

BY JOHN COOK

PAYING FOR INFORMATION IS, AMONG AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, GENERALLY REGARDED as falling in the same moral category as paying for sex. True reporters get their information cleanly and by the sweat of their brow, not by waving around soiled Andrew Jacksons. As the *New York Times's* ethics policy puts it, "We do not pay for interviews or unpublished documents: to do so would create an incentive for sources to falsify material..."

As a former writer for *Brill's Content*, where I was one of founder Steve Brill's ethical shock troops, I subscribed to that logic for many years. I felt dirty every time a source inquired about the possibility of payment for an interview or documents: *Of course not. What sort of reporter do you think I am?*

And then a couple things happened as I went about my career not paying anybody for information: I didn't break the story of how British members of Parliament had been paying for the upkeep of moats around their second homes as taxpayer-financed expenses, a scandal that helped bring down the Labour government. That honor went to *The Daily Telegraph*, which reportedly paid between \$210,000 and \$420,000 for a spreadsheet containing years' worth of egregious expense reports.

Then I failed to break the story of the former presidential candidate who spawned a love-child behind the back of his cancer-stricken wife and made a sex tape with the mistress while repeatedly lying about the affair and cajoling his billionaire backers into paying her hush money. No, *The National Enquirer*—which avowedly pays for information—broke the John Edwards story under the noses of the mainstream political reporters who covered him day in and day out. (The *Enquirer* says it never doled out any money on the Edwards story, but do you believe them?)

And of course I missed out on acquiring an unretouched photo from a *Redbook* cover shoot proving just how radically and creepily women's magazines use Photoshop to digitally hack away at their subjects. Jezebel, the sister site of my current employer, Gawker, paid \$10,000 for that in 2007.

All of the above stories were true and important. None of them are less correct, or less pure, because filthy lucre was involved. And it's not certain that any of them would have come to light absent a monetary inducement. Ethical squeamishness aside, if paying for evidence of massive and systemic abuses of the public trust is wrong, then I don't want to be right.

The main objection to paying sources is that it corrupts the final product. Paying people to talk to you creates a powerful incentive for them to say what you want to hear. That's certainly true in the case of interviews and testimony, and I don't think it's advisable to pay someone to tell their story. But for information or docu-

ments that can be independently verified, it's hard to see how the potential for a payday is different from the myriad other incentives there are for sources of news to invent or twist the information they provide to reporters. *The New York Times* understands that sources lie to its reporters for ideological or commercial reasons—indeed, it happens every day, and on most occasions, the *Times's* estimable reporters are able to filter out the junk info. Everyone who ever provided a leaked document to the *Times* had an agenda, whether it was political or moral or personal. But if that agenda involves a check? The *Times* wouldn't think of it.

Another reason upright defenders of journalistic propriety oppose payouts is that they're often delivered under the table, hidden from the consumer. Television programs routinely mask such transactions by claiming that video or photographs were "licensed." (No, we are not paying the Odoms to sit down exclusively with the *Today* show—we don't pay for interviews. We do, however, need B-roll of the octuplets playing with mommy, and of course it is our practice to compensate license-holders for the use of their copyrighted material.)

Deals like that are dishonest and farcical. But what's wrong with an open and transparent purchase of newsworthy information? Actual investigators—cops and private investigators—routinely pay for tips, whether in the form of cash or promises of help in reducing an informant's sentence. It's hard to see why reporters should be denied access to a technique that's used all the time in the criminal justice system, where the stakes and standards of evidence are immeasurably higher.

Of course, if *The New York Times* and other papers don't want their reporters paying for news, that's fine. It means that the competitive advantage (for some stories, at least), will continue to go to the outlets that do pay. But it's hard to argue that papers that abstain from payments are morally or professionally superior to those that do, when the latter are catching important stories that might otherwise go untold. **CJR**

JOHN COOK is a reporter for Gawker.

BOOK REVIEW

Media Illustrated

NPR's Brooke Gladstone Issues Her Journalism Manifesto

BY TED RALL

ASIDE FROM POSSESSING ONE OF THE DROLLEST VOICES ON THE AIRWAVES, BROOKE GLADSTONE IS CO-HOST OF "ON THE MEDIA," ONE OF NPR'S MORE ENGAGING AND—TO MEDIA JUNKIES LIKE ME—ESSENTIAL WEEKLY PROGRAMS. SHE HAS JUST WRITTEN HER MANIFESTO—IN GRAPHIC NOVEL FORMAT.

HOW COOL. BUT ALSO WEIRD. "ON THE MEDIA" NEVER DISCUSSES COMICS!



The Influencing Machine:
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Illustrated by Josh Neufeld
W.W. Norton & Company
192 pages, \$23.95

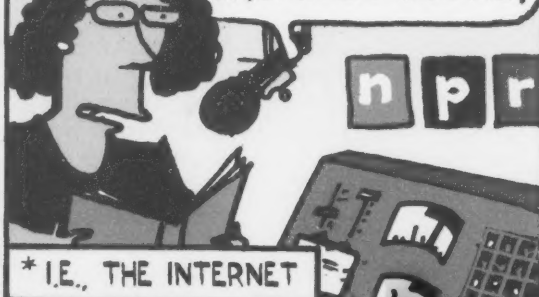
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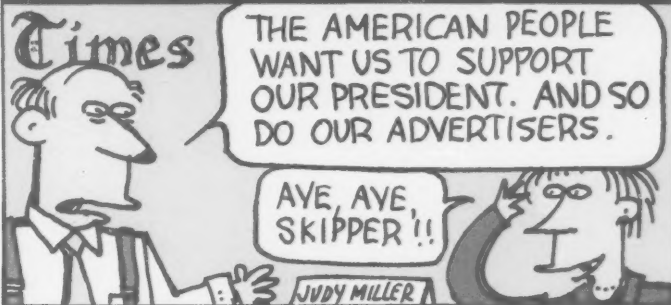


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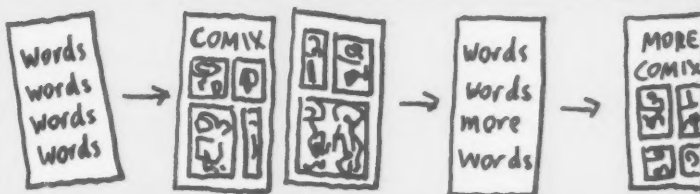
BETTER TO SLEEP UNDER A **BRIDGE** THAN TO SELL OUT TO SOME ADVERTISER OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL!



THEY GAVE US O.J. AND BRITNEY AND MICHAEL JACKSON BECAUSE WE **WANT THEM.**

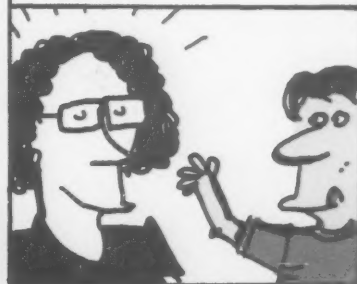


"THE INFLUENCING MACHINE" ALTERNATES BETWEEN SUB-CHAPTERS AND COMIC VIGNETTES ABOUT SUCH TOPICS AS A BESTIARY OF BIAS, THE MEDIA IN EARLY U.S. HISTORY, AND WAR CORRESPONDENCY.



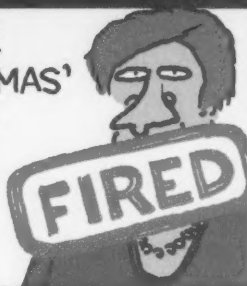
JOSH NEUFELD'S ARTWORK IS COMPETENT AND UNPRETENTIOUS, SLY AND UNINTRUSIVE.

THE OVERALL RESULT IS A NICE BALANCE OF SERIOUS THEORY AND LIGHT HUMOR ABOUT AN OFTEN ABSURD SUBJECT.



THERE ARE QUIRKS. FOR INSTANCE, HER CITING OF LONG-TIME WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT HELEN THOMAS DOESN'T MENTION HER REMARKS ABOUT ISRAEL.

ACTUALLY, THE STORY OF THOMAS' OUSTER WOULD HAVE MADE AN EVEN BETTER DISCUSSION.



I CAUGHT A FEW MISTAKES. ON PP. 91-92, GLADSTONE CLAIMS THE PENTAGON'S EMBEDDING PROGRAM WAS PROMPTED BY THE FIRST GULF WAR.

LEFT UNSAID IS THAT **MEDIA OUTLETS DEMANDED IT** AFTER MANY JOURNALISTS WERE KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN IN 2001.



GLADSTONE'S OWN BIASES, INEVITABLY, POKE THROUGH. ON P. 40 SHE ASSERTS THAT A 2009 NY POST CARTOON WAS RACIST.

THEY'LL HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO WRITE THE NEXT MEDIA MANIFESTO



POLITICAL CARTOONISTS I KNOW, INCLUDING PROGRESSIVES, DID NOT CONSIDER IT TO BE RACIST.

DUMB. INANE. INEPT.



WHY DID GLADSTONE CHOOSE THE COMIC MEDIUM?

"I thought it would be easier."

DRAWING COMICS, SHE CAME TO REALIZE, IS HARDER THAN WRITING PROSE. NEVERTHELESS, HER BOOK CAME OUT WELL: SMART, NOT GIMMICKY.

ANOTHER CARTOONIST SEZ: ONE INK-STAINED THUMB UP!



AS SHE DOES ON THE RADIO, HOWEVER, GLADSTONE ASKS A LOT OF QUESTIONS TO WHICH SHE OBVIOUSLY KNOWS THE ANSWER—BUT SEEMS TOO COY TO TELL US.

C'MON, BROOKE—HOW ABOUT OFF THE RECORD?

MAYBE IN VOLUME 2.



CJR

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

BY JAMES BOYLAN

Roi Ottley's World War II: The Lost Diary of an African American Journalist

Edited with an introduction by
Mark A. Huddle
University Press of Kansas
199 pages, \$29.95

ON JULY 1, 1944, THE TROOP-ship *SS Scythia* set out from New York for England. Among a group of journalists aboard was Roi Ottley, a former reporter for Harlem's *Amsterdam News*, now representing *PM*, New York's left-wing tabloid. Ottley had grown up relatively privileged and had earned a modicum of fame with his 1943 book, *New World A-Coming*, a survey of life in Harlem.

As an accredited African-American correspondent in a captain's uniform, he was an unusual, even unique figure, and he knew it. He calculatingly measured the responses among his companions and among the troops aboard, especially those from the South, who, he reported, got used to him. His sensitivities alerted him to what was happening in England, where, at the instigation of white Army officers, "the American race problem is being transplanted to British soil—sometimes with a venom unknown in the United States." For the most part, Britons were having none of it. Ottley spoke up for the African-American troops, and his bristling stories in *PM* may have been the only coverage of cases of their mistreatment. In addition, he witnessed the fighting in France and interviewed many of those who would



deal with colonial problems after the war.

His day-to-day observations are set down in this previously unpublished diary, which was found in the library at St. Bonaventure University in upstate New York, which Ottley attended. The editor, Mark A. Huddle, who teaches at Georgia College, provides a full introduction reviewing Ottley's uneven career, which culminated in the hostile reception of his last major book because it was viewed by activists as insufficiently militant.

Almost a Family: A Memoir

By John Darton
Knopf
348 pages, \$27.95

ONE OF THE LEGENDS of *The New York Times* is the death by what is clumsily called friendly fire of the correspondent Byron (Barney) Darton in New Guinea in 1942, a few months after the start of the war in the Pacific. Darton left two very young sons; the elder, Robert, became a distinguished scholar (he is now the director of the Harvard library), and the younger became a Pulitzer-winning correspondent for

the *Times*. That younger son, John Darton, has now written a remarkable memoir that stretches from his father's childhood in Michigan to the author's own retirement. With immense tenacity he has followed every

lead and answered every answerable question about his father, about his mother, about their relationship, and about the incident in New Guinea, while telling the story of his own stressful childhood and adolescence.

With the help of his brother, Darton rediscovered the survivors, living their final years, of the hard-drinking, free-loving clique of journalists and pals of the 1920s and '30s that included his father and his mother, born Eleanor Choate. When they met, they were both already married. They got divorces and moved in together but never married, for a reason that John Darton eventually deciphered: the New York law of that era, which granted a divorce only on grounds of adultery, forbade the one found to be adulterous—in this case Barney—to remarry.

Eleanor's fate after Barney's death is a part of the legend that the *Times* has not been at pains to publicize. She worked for the Office of War Information for a time, then took advantage of the *Times's* quasi-official policy of hiring spouses and

children of deceased staffers. After starting in Washington, she was made women's news editor in New York. Being intelligent and ambitious, she tried to upgrade coverage beyond the emphasis on fashion and food to broader issues of concern to the millions of women just emerging from wartime changes. In the *Times* archives, John Darton found that her proposals were met with hard-bitten hostility by Lester Markel, the Sunday editor, and Edwin L. James, managing editor—attitudes that did not soften at the newspaper until decades afterward.

Eventually, Eleanor quit and founded a news syndicate into which she poured her modest savings. She persisted for several years but she could not keep it afloat, and after it collapsed, her life spiraled downward. Darton's account of what later happened to his mother is unsparing of her, and of himself. Once, years ago, Darton writes, he and his mother were lying on a beach in Westport, Connecticut, when she said to him, "Watch out for *The New York Times*. They use you like a sponge. They squeeze you dry and then they toss you away." At that time, he didn't know what she meant. Now, he writes, he has at least an inkling. **CJR**

JAMES BOYLAN is the founding editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review* and professor emeritus of journalism and history at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst.

Headless Body in Newspaper War

A new history brings a gaudy death to life

BY KEVIN BAKER

THE BODY PARTS BEGAN POPPING UP all over New York during the scorching summer of 1897. A man's chest and arms in the East River, a lower torso and hips up in East Harlem, and soon it was clear that murder was afoot.

At least, it was clear to the city's ravenous newspapers. The police, more interested in beating strikers and bullying prostitutes than scrutinizing unstuck limbs, attributed the appearance of these remains to the regular pranks played by medical students of the time, one of the many terrific tidbits to be found in Paul Collins's immensely entertaining history: "The city had five schools that were allowed to use cadavers, and parts of them showed up in the unlikeliest places: You'd find legs in doorways, fingers in cigar boxes, that kind of nonsense."

The city's morgue attendants, who could be suborned for as little as a "cigar or a pouch of shag tobacco," were also inclined to put these grisly finds down to those rascally doctors-to-be, but the next thing they knew, reporters from the *World*, the *Herald*, and the *Evening Telegram* were at their door, with New York's medical examiner and the superintendent of Bellevue Hospital in tow.

These worthies, with the help of the assistant coroner, noted several striking details over the next few days: the man had been dead for less than twenty-four hours; his head had been sawed off the torso in a manner too crude for any medical student; a patch of his chest had been carved away as if to remove some identifying mark; and the stumps of his legs had been boiled.

The press took it from there. The summer of 1897 marked the red-hot climax of the city's newspaper wars, waged primarily between New York's presiding circulation king, Joseph Pulitzer's *World*, and the usurper, William Randolph Hearst's *Evening Journal*, with the other dozen English-language dailies trying to hang on.

Their competition was—both figuratively and literally—the most colorful period in American journalism. Hearst, the young interloper from California, was willing to use as much of his vast inherited mining fortune as necessary. Churning through one fragile, state-of-the-art color press after another—"Smash as many as you have to, George," he would tell his printer—the *Journal* produced funny pages that were, if it said so itself, "eight pages of iridescent polychromatic effervescence, that makes the rainbow look like lead pipe."

**Murder of the Century:
The Gilded Age Crime That
Scandalized a City & Sparked
The Tabloid Wars**

By Paul Collins
Crown
313 pages, \$26

Pulitzer responded with his own brilliant Sunday supplements, which were also printed in fantastic colors and which, as Nicholson Baker would put it, "weighed as much as a small roast beef." The two papers slashed their ad rates, cut their newsstand price down to a penny, turned out endless extra editions, and raided each other's leading editors, writers, and cartoonists.

Yet most of their battles were still decided by good old-fashioned reportorial leg work. In this, no subject was below scrutiny—"race riots in Key West, idiots stealing electricity off high-voltage streetcar lines in Ohio, and two millionaires fighting over a \$15 dog." But best of all remained what Pete Hamill would label "murder at a good address"—not a sad, tawdry "economic" killing, but one, as the song goes, full of passion, jealousy, and hate.

The segmented corpse in the New York morgue had all the markings of such a crime, and the newspapers mustered every resource at their disposal. In the case of the *Journal*, this meant turning out the "Wrecking Crew," "a mob of mustachioed, derby-hatted men [who] would come tumbling out" of its building on Newspaper Row every day in pursuit of the latest scoop, while their editor yelled, "Get excited. God damn it, get excited!"

Whatever their Keystone Kops appearance, the reporters worked with incredible verve and ingenuity. Within three days, the *World*, *Journal*, and *Herald* all had essentially cracked the case. For the first time in newspaper history, the *Journal* put color on the front page, to vividly depict the oilcloth in which the body parts had been wrapped.

While the police let thousands of rubberneckers parade through the morgue, and listened as everyone from palmists to pathologists attributed the murder to "a female Jack the Ripper," "some secret society," a cannibal, or "fiendish" Spaniards who "hacked him to pieces with their machetes," one Ned Brown, a nineteen-year-old cub reporter for the *World*, took a good look at the corpse's powerful hands and arms. They reminded him of those of the masseurs at the Murray Hill Baths, "The House of a Thousand Hangovers," where reporters were known to sweat out woozy nights on the town.

Brown discovered that a womanizing masseur there named Willie Guldensuppe hadn't been to work for days. Before the day was out, he had disguised himself as a soap salesman; gained access to the apartment of Guldensuppe's alleged lover, a licensed midwife named Augusta Nack, who was tidying up before taking the next steamer back to her native Germany; purloined a photograph of Willie from her shelves—and even sold her two bars of soap.

All of Brown's hard work would be squandered. The *World* suffered from the absence of its blind, neurasthenic leader, who bombarded his staff with unhelpful anti-Hearst wires from his soundproofed mansions and yachts, ordering, "We must smash the interloper." Hearst, on the other hand, was on site and as vigorous as his reporters. When the *World* foolishly buried Brown's scoop on page two, Hearst himself jumped on a bicycle and raced the fifty blocks from Printer's Square to the Nack tenement at Thirty-Fifth Street and Ninth Avenue—the Wrecking Crew huffing behind him, in one of the many indelible scenes with which Collins delights us. There he immediately rented Mrs. Nack's apartment (her lease had just ended), posted a guard of *Journal* reporters around the building to keep out competitors, and proclaimed in a headline that evening: MURDER MYSTERY SOLVED BY THE JOURNAL. MRS NACK, MURDERESS!

It would not be quite that simple—which was just fine by the city's newspapers, the *Journal* included. Was it really Mrs. Nack who had killed poor Willie? Was it her brutish ex-husband, Herman? Or was it another lover, a brooding German barber called Martin Thorn, whom Guldensuppe had recently pummeled for the sake of the mysteriously irresistible Augusta? And was it really Willie in the morgue? There was the matter of that missing head, which inspired both the *Journal* and the *World* to drag the East River, while gleeful crowds watched from the piers and called out things like "Three cheers for Guldensuppe!" and "Try a fine-tooth comb!"

Was there ever a gaudier era in New York history? Was there ever a better time to be a newspaperman?

Mrs. Nack and Thorn were soon

arrested, but the case continued for months. Reporters for the *World* discovered the lonely, rented house out in rural Woodside, Queens, where Guldensuppe was murdered; reporters for the *Journal* bribed a trusty in the Queens County Jail to give them a note he was carrying from Nack to Thorn encouraging him to kill himself. Journalists visited freely with the suspects in their cells and elicited their life stories.

'Men, like dogs, go mad at certain seasons.'

The trial itself provided still more revelations and attractions. Herman Nack told police that Augusta, like many midwives, was part of the vast network that ran New York's illicit abortion business. She burned in the family stove two to three fetuses a month for eight to ten years, gave others to a local undertaker to bury, and kept still more in specimen jars to sell to those irrepressible med students. (He claimed at least two young women also failed to survive his ex-wife's operations.)

Then there was Martin Thorn's attorney, the legendary William Howe. The diamond-studded, three-hundred-pound Howe, the son of an English brothel keeper, had done hard time in that country for impersonating a lawyer. Reinventing himself as one of the top defense attorneys in America, he had handled 650 murder and manslaughter cases, and was famous for disrupting trials. Everyone complained that the air in the Queens courthouse was so foul they could barely proceed; afterwards, workmen discovered one hundred dead rats in the courtroom's vents. Howe had no comment.

The yellow press had a field day. The *Journal* plugged the newsroom in via telephone cables—COURT TO PRINTING PRESS IN ONE MINUTE—and purchased champion racing pigeons named Aeolus, Flyaway, and Electra to rush sketches

to Newspaper Row. New Yorkers were entranced, lining up to view a museum waxworks of the killing or to get tickets for the fetid courtroom.

"Events seem to indicate that men, like dogs, go mad at certain seasons," Hearst had observed at the start of the whole episode, and by the next season he would be back to drumming up war with Spain over Cuba, and making a truce with the *World* toward their common goal of cutting losses and crushing a newsboys' strike. He would always look back fondly on the Guldensuppe case: "Ah well, we were young. It was an adventure."

Paul Collins makes it a splendid one, although his book is not without flaws, starting with its dubious title. *Murder of the Century?* Hello! Lincoln? More locally, there was that sitting US vice president, Aaron Burr, shooting a Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton. Ultimately, the Guldensuppe murder had no more significance than an especially clever episode of *Law & Order*. Old New York, red in tooth and claw, produced similar, press-fanned sensations every couple of years.

The title is indicative, rather, of the latest creeping fungus in publishing, the invention of an entire genre known as "narrative history." Its ideal is Erik Larson's *The Devil in the White City*, and it is based on the condescending premise that people will not read history unless it is wrapped around a good, gory murder, and preferably a serial killer.

To get a better overall history of the yellow journalism wars, one might turn to other sources, such as James McGrath Morris's outstanding new biography of Pulitzer. But Collins, the author of seven books, an assistant professor of English, and *Weekend Edition's* "literary detective," compensates for such industry manipulations. He has done prodigious research, has an eye for the telling detail, and manages to send frissons of Gothic horror running up the spine just with his descriptions of the spooky house out in Woodside where Guldensuppe met his end. He has attained the old newspaperman's highest standard, which is to root out a good story and tell it well. **CJR**

KEVIN BAKER is working on a social history of New York City baseball.

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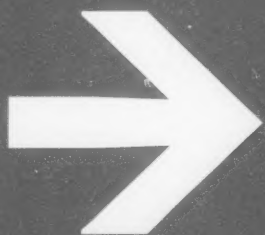
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The Lower Case

**GIRLS THINK TANK HAS EMERGED
AS KEY VOICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

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**Padres pitcher Latos writes
'I hate SF' on balls**

The Associated Press 2/19/11

Youth hunts start season

The Bellingham (WA) Herald 9/24/10

Bishops agree sex abuse rules

The Sunday Business Post (Dublin, Ireland) 4/3/11

Police: Suicide followed natural death

Las Vegas Review-Journal 3/4/11

**Bullying session
to be rescheduled**

The Post-Crescent (Appleton, WI) 1/18/11

**1 in 5 U.S. moms have babies
with multiple dads, study says**

MSNBC.com 4/1/11

Judge raises bail for sex offender

The Boston Globe 7/30/10

**Texas man accused of shooting deputies in
custody**

USA Today 9/20/10

**Woman accused of mugging a
man using a walker**

San Antonio Express-News 4/1/11

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